

THE ARGOSY

SEPTEMBER 1, 1872.

WITHIN THE MAZE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT AFTERNOON SERVICE.

THE still quietness of the sabbath morn shed its peace over Foxwood. Within the Court of that name—where the lawns were green and level, and the sweet flowers exhaled their perfume, and a tree here and there was already putting on its autumn tints—the aspect of peace seemed to be more especially exhaled.

The windows of the rooms stood open. Inside one of them the breakfast was on the table yet, Miss Blake seated at it. Matins at St. Jerome's had been unusually prolonged; and Sir Karl and Lady Andinnian had taken breakfast when she got home. The Reverend Damon Puff had come to help Mr. Cattacomb; imparting to St. Jerome's an additional attraction.

While Miss Blake took her breakfast, Lucy went out amidst her flowers. The scent of the mignonette filled the air, the scarlet colours of the geraniums made the beds brilliant. Lucy wore a simple muslin dress with sprigs of green upon it—for the weather was still that of summer though the season was not, and the nightingales were no longer heard of an evening. Trinity Church boasted a set of sweet-toned bells and they were ringing melodiously on the air. When the Sacrament was administered—the first Sunday in each month—they generally did ring before service. This was the first in September. Lucy stooped to pick some mignonette as she listened to the bells. She was getting to look what she was—worn and unhappy. Nothing could be much less satisfactory than her life: it seemed to herself sometimes that she

was like a poor flower withering for lack of sunshine. For the first time for several weeks she meant, that day, to stay for the after service : her mind had really been in too great a chaos before : but this week she had been schooling herself, and praying and striving to be tranquil.

Karl came round the terrace from his room and crossed the lawn. In his hand he held a most exquisite rose, and offered it to her. She thanked him as she took it. In manner they were always courteous to one another.

"What a lovely day it is !" she said. "So calm and still."

"And not quite so hot as it was a few weeks ago," he replied. "Those must be Mr. Sumnor's bells."

"Yes. I wish they rang every Sunday. I think—it may be all fancy, but I can't help thinking it—that people would go to church more heartily if the bells rang for them as they are ringing now, instead of calling them with the usual ding-dong."

"There is something melancholy in the ringing of bells," observed Karl, in abstraction.

"But, when the heart is in itself melancholy, the melancholy of the bells brings to it a feeling of soothing consolation," was Lucy's hasty answer. And the next moment she felt sorry that she had said it. Never, willingly, did she allude to aught that could touch on their estrangement.

"Talking of church, Lucy," resumed Karl, in a different and almost confidential tone, "I am getting a little annoyed about that place, St. Jerome's. They are going too far. I wish you would speak a word of caution to Theresa."

"I—I scarcely like to," answered Lucy after a pause, her delicate cheek faintly flushing, for she was conscious that she had not dared to talk much on any score with Theresa lately, lest Theresa might allude to the subject of *The Maze*. "She is so much older and wiser than I am—"

"Wiser ?" interrupted Karl. "I think not. In all things, save one, you have ten times the good plain sense that she has. That one thing, Lucy, I shall never be able to understand, or account for, to my dying day."

"And, moreover, I was going to add," continued Lucy, flushing a deeper red at the allusion, "I am quite sure that Theresa would not heed me, whatever I might say."

"Well, I don't know what is to be done. People are mocking at St. Jerome's and its frequenters' folly more than I care to hear, and blame me for allowing it to go on. I should not like to be written to by the Bishop of the diocese."

"*You* written to !" cried Lucy in surprise.

"It is within the range of possibility. The place is on the Andinnian land."

"I think, were I you, I would speak to Mr. Cattacomb."

Karl made a wry face. He did not like the man. Moreover he fancied—as did Lucy in regard to Miss Blake—that whatever he might say would make no impression. But for this he had spoken before. But, now that another was come and the folly was being doubled, it lay in his duty to remonstrate. The whole village gossiped and laughed; Sir Adam was furious. Ann Hopley carried the gossip home to him—which of course lost nothing in the transit—and he abused Karl for not interfering.

They went to church together, Karl and his wife. It was a thinner congregation than ordinary. Being a grand field day at St. Jerome's with procession and banners, some of them had gone off thither. Kneeling by her husband's side in their pew, Lucy felt the influence of the holy place, and peace seemed to steal down upon her. Margaret Sumnor was opposite, looking at her: and in Margaret's face there was a strange, pitying compassion, for she saw that that other face was becoming sadder day by day.

It was a plain, good sermon: Mr. Sumnor's sermons always were: its subject the blessings promised for the next world; its text, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The tears rose to Lucy's eyes as she listened. Karl listened too, wrapt in the words. Just for the quarter of an hour it lasted—the sermons were always short the first Sunday in the month—both of them seemed to have passed beyond their cares into Heaven. It almost seemed to matter little what the trouble of this short span on earth might be, with that glorious fruition to come hereafter.

"I am going to stay," whispered Lucy, as the service ended.

Karl nodded but made no other answer. The congregation filed out, and still he sat on. Lucy wondered. All in a moment it flashed upon her that he also must be going to stay. Her face turned crimson: the question, was he fit for it, involuntarily suggesting itself.

He did stay. They knelt side by side together and received the elements of Christ's holy Ordinance. After that, Karl was on his knees in his pew until the end, buried as it seemed in beseeching prayer. It was impossible for Lucy to believe that he could be living an ill life of any kind at that present time—whatever he might have done.

He held out his arm as they quitted the church, and she took it. It was not often that she did. Thus they walked home together, exchanging a sentence or two between whiles. Karl went at once to his room, saying he should not take anything to eat: he had the headache. Miss Blake had "snatched a morsel," and had gone out again to hear the children's catechism, Hewitt said. One thing must be conceded—that she was zealous in her duties.

And so Lucy was alone. She took a "morsel" too, and went to sit

under the acacia tree. When an hour, or so, had passed, Karl came up, and surprised her with tears on her cheeks.

"Is it any new grief?" he asked.

"No," she answered, half lost in the sorrow her thoughts had been abandoned to, and neglecting her usual reticence. "I was but thinking that I am full young to have so much unhappiness."

"We both have enough of that, I expect. I know I have. But yours is partly of your own making, Lucy; mine is not."

"Not of his own making!" ran her thoughts. "Of his own planning, at any rate." But she would not say a word to mar the semi-peace which pervaded, or ought to pervade, their hearts that day.

"That was a nice sermon this morning," he resumed, sitting down by her on the bench.

"Very. I almost forgot that we were not close to heaven: that we had, speaking according to earth's probabilities, years and years and years to live out here first."

"We shall have to live them out, Lucy, I suppose,—by heaven's will. The prospect of it looks anything but consolatory."

"I thought you seemed very sad," she remarked in a low tone. "I had no idea you were going to stay."

"*Sad!*" He laid his hand upon her knee; not, in any particular affection, but to give emphasis to his word. "Sad is not the term for it, Lucy. Misery, rather; dread; despair—the worst word you will. I wished with a yearning wish that I was in Mr. Sumnor's heaven—the heaven he described—if only some others could go before me, so that I did not leave them here."

Lucy wondered of whom he spoke. She thought it must lie between herself and Mrs. Grey. Karl had been thinking of his poor proscribed brother, for whom the glad earth could never open her arms freely again.

"I think what Mr. Sumnor said must be true," resumed Lucy. "That the more sorrow we have to endure in this world, the brighter will be our entrance to the next. I am sure he has a great deal of sorrow himself: whenever he preaches of it he seems to feel it so deeply."

Karl appeared not to hear. He was gazing upwards, a look of patient pain on his pale face. There were moments—and this was one—when Lucy's arms and heart alike yearned to encircle him, and ask for his love to be hers again. She cared for him still—oh, how much!—and wished she could awake to find The Maze, and all the trouble connected with it, a hideous dream.

They sat on, saying nothing. The birds sang as in spring, the trees waved gently beneath the blue sky, and the green grass was grateful for the eye to rest upon. On the handsome house lay the glad sun: not a sound of every-day labour, indoors or out, broke the stillness.

All was essentially peace. Except—except within their own wearied breasts.

The bell of Trinity Church rang out for service, arousing Lucy from her reverie. She said she should like to attend it.

"What ; this afternoon ?" exclaimed Karl. " You are not accustomed to go in the afternoon."

That was true. The heat of the summer weather had been almost unbearable and Lucy had not ventured to church in it more than once a day.

" It is cooler now," she answered. " And I always like to go if I can when I have stayed for the communion."

But Karl held back from it : rather, Lucy thought, in an unaccountable manner, for he was ever ready to second any wish of hers. He did not seem inclined to go forth again, and said, as a plea of excuse, that he preferred to retain the impression of the morning's sermon on his mind, rather than let it give place to an inferior one. His head was aching badly.

" I do not ask you to come," said Lucy, gently. " I should like to go myself, but I can go quite well alone."

When she came down with her things on, however, she found him ready also ; and they set off together.

It may be questioned, though, whether Lucy would have gone had she foreseen what was to happen. In the middle of the service, while the "Magnificat" was being sung, a respectable, staid woman entered the church with an infant in her arms. A beautifully dressed infant. Its long white robe elaborately embroidered, its delicate blue cloak of surpassing richness, its covering veil of lace dainty as a gossamer thread. The attire, not often seen at Foxwood, caught Lucy's eye, and she wondered who the infant was. It seemed to her that she had seen the nurse's face before, and began to ransack her memory. In an instant it flashed on her with a shock—it was the servant at The Maze.

She turned her eyes on her husband : not intentionally, but in an uncontrollable impulse. Karl was looking furtively at the woman and child—a red flush dyeing his face. Poor Lucy's benefit in the afternoon service was over.

The baby had come to be baptised. Ann Hopley sat down on a bench to which she was shown, just underneath the Andinnian pew. Towards the close of the second lesson, the clerk advanced to her, and entered on a whispered colloquy. Every word of which was distinct to Karl and Lucy.

" Have you brought this infant to be christened ? "

" To be baptised," replied Ann Hopley. " Not christened."

The clerk paused. " It's not usual with us to baptise children unless they are so delicate as to render it necessary," said he. " We prefer to christen at once."

"But this child is delicate," she answered. "My mistress, who is herself still very ill, has got nervous about it and wishes it done. The christening must be left until she is better."

"It's the baby at The Maze, I think?"

"Yes. Mrs. Grey's."

The second lesson came to an end. Mr. Sumnor's voice ceased, and he stepped out of the reading desk to perform the baptism. Ann Hopley had drawn away the veil, and Lucy saw the child's face; a fair, sweet, delicate little face, calm and placid in its sleep.

The congregation, a very small one always in the afternoon, rose up, and stood on tiptoe to see and hear. Mr. Sumnor, standing at the font, took the child in his arms.

"Name this child."

"Charles," was the audible and distinct reply of Ann Hopley. And Lucy Andinnian turned red and white; she thought it was, so to say, named after her husband. As indeed was the case.

The child was brought back to the bench again; and the afternoon service went on to its close. There was no sermon. When Lucy rose from her knees, the woman and baby had gone. Karl offered her his arm as they quitted the church, but she would not take it. They walked home side by side, saying never a word to each other.

"*That* was the reason why he wanted to keep me away from church this afternoon!" was Lucy's indignant thought. "And to dress it up like that! How, how shall I go on, and bear?"

But Lucy was mistaken. Karl had known no more about it than she, and was struck with astonishment to see Ann Hopley come in. It arose exactly as the woman had stated. During the night the child had seemed so ill that its mother had become nervously uneasy because it was not baptised, and insisted upon its being brought to church that afternoon.

Meanwhile Ann Hopley had hurried homewards. Partly to avoid observation, partly because she wanted to be back with her mistress. In traversing the short space of road between the Court gates and The Maze, she encountered Miss Blake coming home from St. Jerome's. Miss Blake, seeing a baby sumptuously attired, and not at the moment recognizing Ann Hopley in her bonnet, crossed the road to inquire whose child it was. Then she saw it was the servant at The Maze: but she stopped all the same.

"I should like to take a peep at the baby, nurse."

"It's asleep, ma'am, and I am in a hurry," was the answer, given in all truthfulness, not in courtesy; for it must be remembered that Ann Hopley had no grounds to suspect that this lady took any special interest in affairs at The Maze. "It slept all through its baptism."

"Oh it has been baptised, has it! At Mr. Sumnor's church?"

"Yes, at Mr. Sumnor's. There is no other church but that," added

the woman, totally ignoring St. Jerome's, but not thinking to give offence thereby.

Miss Blake put aside the lace and looked at the sleeping baby.
"What is its name, nurse?"

"Charles."

"Oh," said Miss Blake, the same notion striking her, as to the name, that had struck Lucy. "It is Mr. Grey's name I suppose—or something like it?"

"No, it is not Mr. Grey's name," replied the woman.

"Who is the baby considered like?" went on Miss Blake, still regarding it. "Its father or its mother?"

"It's not much like anybody, that I see, ma'am. The child's too young to show any likeness yet."

"I declare that I see a likeness to Sir Karl Andinnian!" cried Miss Blake, speaking partly upon impulse. For, in looking whether she could trace this likeness, her fancy seemed to show her that it was there. "What a strange thing, nurse!"

With one startled gaze into Miss Blake's eyes, Ann Hopley went off in a huff. The suggestion had not been palatable.

"If he's like Sir Karl, I must never bring him abroad again, lest by that means suspicion should come to my master," she thought, as she took the gate key from her pocket and let herself in. "But I don't believe it can be: for I'm sure there's not a bit of resemblance between the two brothers."

"How plain it all is!" sighed Miss Blake, regarding the cross upon her ivory prayer-book as she went over to the Court. And that ridiculously simple Lucy does not see it! Bartimeus was blind, and so is she. He could see nothing until his eyes were opened: her eyes have been opened and yet she will not see!"

No, Miss Blake, neither could the self-righteous Pharisee see, when he went into the Temple to thank God that he was better than other men, and especially than the poor publican.

St. Jerome's was prospering. It had taken—as Tom Pepp the bell-ringer phrased it—a spurt. A rich maiden lady of uncertain age, fascinated by the Reverend Guy Cattacomb's oratory and spectacles, came over once a day in her brougham from Basham, and always put a substantial coin into the offertory-bag during the service.

The Reverend Damon Puff found favour too. He had a beautiful black moustache, which he was given to stroke lovingly at all kinds of unseasonable times; his hair was parted down the middle, back and front, and he had an interesting lisp: otherwise he was a harmless kind of young man, devotedly attentive to the ladies, and not overburdened with brains. Mr. Puff had taken up his abode for the present at Basham, and came over in the omnibus. Two omnibus

loads of fair worshippers arrived now daily: there was frightful scuffling among them to get into the one that contained the parson.

But, flourishing though St. Jerome's was, people were talking about it in anything but a reverend manner. Sir Karl Andinnian was blamed for allowing it to go on unchecked—as he told his wife. Had Karl been a perfectly free man, unswayed by that inward and ever-present dread, he had certainly put a stop to it long ago, or obliged Farmer Truefit to do so; but as it was, he had done nothing. The sensitive fear of making enemies swayed him. Not fear for his own sake, but lest it should in some way draw observation on The Maze and on him whom it contained. When the mind is weighed down with an awful secret, danger seems to lie in everything, reasonable and unreasonable. But Karl found he must do something.

A comic incident happened one day. There came a lady to Foxwood Court, sending in her card as "Mrs. Brown" and asking to see Sir Karl Andinnian. Sir Karl found she was from Basham. She had come over to pray him, she said with tears in her eyes, that he would put a stop to the goings-on at St. Jerome's and shut up the place. She had two daughters who had been drawn into its vortex and she could not draw them out again. Twice and three times every day of their lives did they come over to Foxwood, by rail, omnibus, or on foot; their whole thoughts and days were absorbed by St. Jerome's: by the services, by cleaning the church, by Mr. Cattacomb's lectures at home, or in helping Mr. Puff teach the children. Sir Karl replied that he did not know what he could do in the matter, and intimated very courteously that the more effectual remedy in regard to the Misses Brown would be for Mrs. Brown to keep the young ladies at home. They would not be kept at home, Mrs. Brown said with a burst of sobs; they had learnt to set her at defiance: and—she begged to hint to Sir Karl—that in her opinion it was not quite the right thing for a young girl to be closeted with a young man, for half an hour at a time, under plea of confession, though the man did write himself priest. What on earth had they got to confess, Mrs. Brown wanted to know, becoming a little heated with the argument: if they'd confess how undutiful they were to her, their mother, perhaps some good might come of it.

Well, this occurred. Sir Karl got rid of Mrs. Brown; but he could not shut his ears to the public chatter; and he was conscious that something or other ought to be done, or attempted. He could not see why people should expect that it lay in his hands, and he certainly did not know whether he could effect anything, even with all the good will in the world. Mr. Cattacomb might civilly laugh at him. Not knowing whether any power lay with him, or not, he felt inclined to put the question to the only lawyer Foxwood contained—Mr. St. Henry.

But oh, what was this petty grievance to the great trouble ever lying upon him? As nothing. The communication made to him by Ann Hopley, of the night watches she had seen, of the stranger who afterwards presented himself at The Maze gate with his questions, was so much addition to his tormenting dread. Just about this time, too, it came to his knowledge, through Hewitt, that inquiries were being made as to The Maze. Private, whispered inquiries; not apparently with any particular object; more in the way of idle gossip. Who was putting them? Karl could not learn. Hewitt did not know who, but was sure of the fact. The story told by Mrs. Chaffen of the gentleman she had seen at The Maze the night she entered it, and "which it was at her wits' end to know whether he were a ghost or not," was circulating round the village and reached Karl's ears, to his intense annoyance and dismay. Added to all this, was the doubt that lay within himself, as to whether Smith the agent was Philip Salter, and what his course in the matter should be. In his own mind he felt persuaded that it was Salter, and no other; but the persuasion was scarcely sufficiently assured to induce him to act. He felt the danger of speaking a word of accusation to Smith wrongfully—the danger it might bring on his brother—and therefore he, in this, vacillated and hesitated, and did nothing.

Do not reproach Karl Andinnian with being an unstable or vacillating man. He was nothing of the kind. But he was living under exceptionable circumstances, and there seemed to be risk to his unfortunate brother on the left hand and on the right. If by chance discovery should supervene through any rash step of his, Karl's, why remorse would never cease from racking him to the end of his bitter life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT LAWYER ST. HENRY'S.

LAWYER ST. HENRY sat at his well spread breakfast table. He was a little man with a bald head and good natured red face, who enjoyed his breakfast as well as all his other meals. Since his nieces had considered it necessary to their spiritual welfare to attend matins at St. Jerome's, the lawyer had been condemned to breakfast alone. The sun shone on the street, and Mr. St. Henry sat in a room that faced it. Through the wire blinds he could see all the passings and repassings of his neighbours; which he very well liked to do; as well as the doings of Paradise Row opposite.

"Hallo!" he cried, catching sight of a face at Mrs. Jinks's parlour window, "Cattacombs not gone out this morning! Puff must have come over early to officiate. Thinks he'll take it easy, I suppose, now he's got an underling: no blame to him, either. The girls will be dished for once."

Laughing a little at the thought, he helped himself to a portion of a tempting looking cutlet surrounded with mushrooms. This being nearly despatched, he had leisure to look abroad again and make his mental comments.

"There goes the doctor : he's out early this morning. Going to see old Etheredge perhaps : wonder how the old fellow is. And there's Mother Jinks taking in a sweetbread. Must be for the parson's breakfast. Sweetbreads are uncommonly good, too : I'll have one myself to-morrow morning, if it can be got. Why here comes Sir Karl Andinnian ! *He* is out early, too. That young man looks to me as though he had some care upon him. It's a nice countenance ; very : and if—I declare he is coming here ! What on earth can he want ?"

Sir Karl Andinnian was ringing the door-bell. It has been already said that the lawyer's offices were in Basham, for which place he generally started as soon as breakfast was over. Therefore, if any client wished to see him at Foxwood, it had to be early in the morning or late in the evening. This was known and understood.

Sir Karl was shown in, Mr. St. Henry glancing at his breakfast-table and the three or four dirty plates upon it. He had finished now, and they sat down together at the window. Sir Karl, not to detain him unnecessarily, entered at once upon the question he had come to ask—Had he, or had he not, power to do anything with St. Jerome's? And the lawyer laughed a little ; for St. Jerome's afforded him fun, rather than otherwise.

"Of course, Sir Karl, if Truefit chose to warn them off the land, he could do it," was the lawyer's reply. "Not without notice, though, I think : I don't know what the agreement was. As to yourself—well I am not clear whether you could do anything : I should like to see Truefit's lease first. But, if they were shut out of St. Jerome's to-day, they'd contrive to start another place to-morrow."

"That is quite likely," said Karl.

"My advice to you is this, Sir Karl : don't bother yourself about it," said the easy-going lawyer. "People expect you to interfere? Never mind that : let them expect. The thing will die away of itself when winter comes. Once the frost and snow set in, the girls, silly monkeys, won't be trapesing to St. Jerome's ; neither will they come jinketing over by omnibusfuls from Basham. Wait and shut it up then. If you attempt to do it now you will meet with wide opposition : by waiting, you may do it almost without any."

"You really think so, Mr. St. Henry!"

"I am nearly sure so," said the hearty lawyer. "There's nothing like bad weather for stopping expeditions of chivalry. But for having had the continuous sunshine the summer has given us, St. Jerome's would not have been the success it is."

"They have dressed Tom Pepp in a conical cap and put a red cross all down his back outside," said Sir Karl.

The lawyer burst into a laugh. "I know," he said. "I hear of the vagaries from my nieces. It's fun for me."

"But it is not religion, Mr. St. Henry."

"Bless me, no. Religion? The girls may give it that name; and perhaps one or two among them may be earnest enough in thinking it so: the rest are only after Cattacomb."

"There's another one now, I hear. One Puff."

"And a fine puff of wind *he* is. Got no more brains than a gander. I'll see Truefit and inquire what agreement it was he made with them, if you like, Sir Karl, but I should certainly recommend you to leave the matter alone a little longer."

Sir Karl thought he would accept the advice; and got up to leave. He often saw Truefit about the land, and could take an opportunity of asking the question himself. As he stood for a moment at the window, there passed down the middle of the street a stranger, walking slowly, to whom Sir Karl's attention was at once directed. It was Mr. Strange.

Now it happened that Sir Karl had never seen this man before—at least, he had never noticed him. For the detective—being warned by Grimley that Sir Karl had, or seemed to have, some reason for screening Salter—had kept out of Sir Karl's way. He thought it would not conduce at all to his success to let Sir Karl know he was down there on the scent. Therefore, whenever he had observed Sir Karl coming along—and he had kept his eyes sharply keen—he had popped into a shop, or drawn behind a hedge, or got over a stile into another field. And Karl, in his mind's abstraction—for it nearly always was abstracted, lost in its own fear and pain—had not thought of looking out gratuitously for strangers. But, standing up at the lawyer's window, the street close before him, he could not fail to observe those who passed up and down: and his attention was at once drawn to this man.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"That! oh that's a Mr. Strange," said the lawyer, laughing again—and in his laugh this time there was something significant. "At least that's his name *here*."

"And not elsewhere?"

"I fancy not."

"Is he staying at Foxwood? What is he doing here?"

"He is certainly staying at Foxwood. As to his business, I conclude it is something in the private detective line, Sir Karl."

Mr. Strange, whose attention in passing had been directed to some matter on the other side of the way and not to the lawyer's window, and consequently did not know that he was being watched, had halted a little lower down to speak to the landlord of the Red Lion. All in a

moment, as Karl looked at him, the notion flashed into his mind that this man bore a strong resemblance to the description given by Ann Hopley of the man who had invaded The Maze. The notion came to him in the self same moment that the words of the lawyer fell on his ears—"His business, I conclude, is something in the private detective line." What with the notion, and what with the words, Karl Andinian fell into a confused inward tumult, that caused his heart's blood to stop, and then course wildly on. Business at Foxwood, connected with detectives, must have reference to his brother, and to him alone.

"A slight-made gentleman with a fair face and light curly hair, looking about thirty," had been Ann Hopley's description ; it answered in every particular to the man Karl was gazing at ; gazing until he watched him out of sight. Lawyer St. Henry, naturally observant, thought his guest, the baronet, stared after the man as though he held some peculiar interest in him.

"Do you know who that man really is, Mr. St. Henry ?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Sir Karl. No reason why I should not, for I have not been told to keep it a secret. Some little time back, my nieces grew full of the new lodger at Mrs. Jinks's ; they were talking of him incessantly : A gentleman reading divinity——"

"Why that's Mr. Cattacombe," interrupted Sir Karl. "He lodges at Mrs. Jinks's."

"Not that ladies' idiot," cried the lawyer rather roughly. "I beg your pardon, Sir Karl, but the Reverend Guy sometimes puts me out of patience. This man has the upper rooms, Cattacombe the lower. Well, to go on. My nieces were always talking of this new gentleman, a Mr. Strange, who had come to Foxwood to get up his health, and to read up for some divinity examination. I heard so much about him as to get curious myself : it was a new face, you see, Sir Karl, and girls go wild over that. One morning, when I was starting for the office, the gig at the door, Jane ran out to me. 'Uncle,' she said, 'that's Mr. Strange coming down Mrs. Jinks's steps now : you can see him if you look.' I did look, Sir Karl, and saw the gentleman you have just seen pass. His face struck me at once as one that I was familiar with, though at the moment I could not remember where I had seen him. It came to me while I looked—and I knew him for an officer connected with the detective force at Scotland Yard."

Karl drew a long breath. He was listening greedily.

"About a year ago," resumed the lawyer, "my agent in London, Mr. Blair, had occasion to employ a detective upon some matter he was engaged in. I was in London for a few days and saw the man twice at Blair's—and knew him again now. It was this same Mr. Strange."

"And you say Strange is not his right name? What is the right one?"

"Well, I can't tell you the right one, Sir Karl, for I cannot remember it. I am sure of one thing—that it was not Strange. It was a longer name, and I think rather a peculiar name; but I can't hit upon it. He must be down here on some private business, and has no doubt his own reasons for keeping incog. I recollect Blair told me he was one of the astutest officers in the detective force."

"Has he recognized you?"

"He could not recognize me. I don't suppose he ever saw me to notice me. Each time that he called on Blair, it happened that I was in the front office with the clerks when he passed through it. He was not likely to have observed me."

"You have not spoken to him, then?"

"Not I."

"And—you don't know what his business here may be."

"Not at all. Can't guess at it. It concerns neither you nor me, Sir Karl, and therefore I have not scrupled to tell *you* so much. Of course you will not repeat it again. If he chooses to remain unknown here, and pass himself off for a student of divinity—doubtless for sufficient reasons—I should not be justified in proclaiming that he is a London detective, and so possibly ruin his game."

Sir Karl made a motion of acquiescence. His brain was whirling in no measured degree. He connected the presence of this detective at Foxwood with the paragraph that had appeared in the newspaper, touching the convict at Portland Island.

"Would there—would there be any possibility of getting to know his business?" he dreamily asked.

"Not the slightest, I should say, unless he chooses directly to disclose it. Why? You cannot have any interest in it, I presume, Sir Karl, whatever it may be."

"No, no; certainly no," replied Sir Karl, awaking to the fact that he was on dangerous ground. "One is apt to get curious on hearing of business connected with detectives," he added, laughing; "as interested as one does in a good novel."

"Ay, true," said the lawyer, unsuspiciously.

"At Mrs. Jinks's, he is staying, is he," carelessly remarked Karl, turning to depart.

"At Mrs. Jinks's, Sir Karl; got her drawing-room. Wonder how the Rev. Guy would feel if he knew the man over his head was a 'cute detective officer?'

"I suppose the officer cannot be looking after *him*," jested Sir Karl. "St. Jerome's is the least sound thing I know at Foxwood."

The lawyer laughed a hearty laugh as he attended Sir Karl to the door; at which Mr. St. Henry's gig was now waiting to take him into Basham.

It was not a hot morning, but Karl Andinnian took off his hat re-

peatedly on the way home to wipe his brow. The dreadful catastrophe he had been fearing for his unfortunate brother seemed to be drawing ominously near.

"But for that confounded Smith, Adam might have been away before," he groaned. "I know he might. Smith——"

And there Karl stopped : stopped as though his speech had been suddenly cut off. For a new idea had darted into his mind, and he stayed to ponder it.

Was this detective officer down here to look after Philip Salter ?—and not after Adam at all ?

A conviction, that it must be so, took possession of him ; and in the first flush of it the relief was inexpressibly great. But he remembered again the midnight watcher of The Maze and the morning visit following it ; and his hopes fell back to zero. That this was the same man there could remain no doubt whatever.

Passing into his own room, Karl sat down and strove to think the matter out. He could arrive at no certain conclusion. One minute he felt sure the object was his brother; the next that it was only Salter.

But, in any case, allowing that it was Salter, there must be danger to Adam. If this cunning London detective were to get into The Maze premises again and *see* the prisoner there, all would be over. The probability was, that he was personally acquainted with the noted criminal Adam Andinnian : and it might be, that he had gained a suspicion that Adam Andinnian was alive.

One thing Karl could not conceal from himself—and it brought to him a rush of remorse. If the detective had come down after Salter, he—he, Karl—must have been the means of bringing him there.

But for that unpleasant consciousness he would have gone straight off to Smith the agent, and told him of the trouble that was threatening Adam, and said, What shall we do in it ; how screen him ? But he did not dare. He did not dare to make a move or stir a step that might bring Smith and the detective in contact. He could not quite understand why, if Smith were really Salter, the detective had not already pounced upon him : but he thought it quite likely that Smith might be keeping himself out of sight. In short, the thoughts and surmises that crossed and recrossed Karl's brain, some probable enough, others quite improbable, were legion. Not for the world, if he could help it, would he aid—further than he had perhaps unhappily aided—in denouncing Salter : and, knowing what he had done, he could not face the man. He had never intended to harm him.

So there Karl was, overwhelmed with this new perplexity, and not able to stir in it. He saw not what he could do. To address the detective himself, and say whom are you after, would be worse than folly : of all people he, Karl Andinnian, must keep aloof from him. It might be that there was only a *suspicion* about Adam's being alive,

that they were trying to find out whether it was so or not. For him, Karl, to interfere or show interest, would augment it.

But this suspense was well nigh intolerable. Karl could not live under it. Something he must do. If only he could set the question at rest, as to which of the two criminals the detective was after, it would be a good deal gained. And he could only do that by applying to Mr. Burtenshaw. It was not sure that he would, but there was a chance that he might.

Lady Andinnian was in her little sitting room upstairs, when she heard Sir Karl's footstep. He entered without knocking : which was very unusual. For they had grown ceremonious one with another since the estrangement, and knocked at doors and asked permission to enter, as strangers. Lucy was adding up her housekeeping bills.

"I am going to London, Lucy. Some business has arisen that I am very anxious about, and I must go up at once."

"With Plunkett and Plunkett?" she asked, a slight sarcasm in her tone, though Karl detected it not, as she remembered the plea he had urged for the journey once before.

"No, not with Plunkett and Plunkett. The business, though, is the same that has been troubling my peace all the summer. I think I shall be home to-night, Lucy : but if I cannot see the person I am going up to see, I may have to wait in town until to-morrow. Should the last train not bring me down, you will know the reason why."

"Of course your movements are your own, Sir Karl."

He sighed a little, and stood looking from the window. The first train he could catch would not go by for nearly an hour, so he had ample time to spare. Lucy spoke.

"I was going to ask you for some money. I have not enough, I think, for these bills."

"Can you wait until I return, Lucy? I have not much more in the house than I shall want. Or shall I give you a cheque? Hewitt can go to the bank at Basham and cash it."

"Oh, I can wait quite well. There's no hurry for a day or two."

"You shall have it to-morrow in any case. If I stay away as long as that I shall be sure to return during banking hours, and will get out at Basham and draw some money."

"Thank you."

"Good bye, Lucy."

She held out her hand in answer to his, and wished him good bye in return. He kept it for a minute in his, stooped, and kissed her cheek.

It brought a rush of colour to her face, but she said nothing. Only drew away her hand, bent over her figures again, and began adding them up steadily. He passed round to his chamber, putting a few things in a hand bag in case he had to stay away the night.

Then he went down to his room and penned a few lines to Adam,

entreating him to be unusually cautious. The note was enclosed in an outer envelope, addressed to Mrs. Grey. He rang the bell for Hewitt, and proceeded to lock his desk.

"I want you to go over to the Maze, Hewitt," he said in a low tone—and had got so far when, happening to raise his eyes, he saw it was Giles and not Hewitt who had entered. Karl had his wits about him, and Hewitt came in at the moment.

"Hewitt, I want you to step over to the Maze and inquire whether the plumbers have been there yet. There's something wrong with a drain. Ask the servants at the same time how their mistress is getting on."

Giles had stood gaping and listening. Karl bade him look for his umbrella.

"No message, Hewitt, and no answer," breathed his master, as he handed him the note. "Put it in your pocket."

"All right, sir," nodded Hewitt, and was away before Giles came back with the umbrella.

Perhaps Mr. Burtenshaw was astonished, perhaps not, to see Sir Karl Andinnian enter that same afternoon. He, the detective, was poring over his papers, as usual, but he turned from them to salute his visitor.

"Will you take a seat, Sir Karl, for two minutes. After that, I am at your service."

"You know me then, Mr. Burtenshaw!" exclaimed Karl.

"The man who happened to come into the room with Grimley, the last time you were here, said you were Sir Karl Andinnian," replied the officer without scruple. "Take a seat, sir, pray."

Mr. Burtenshaw placed four or five letters, already written, within their envelopes, directed, and stamped them. Then he quitted the room, probably to send them to the post, came in again, and drew a chair in front of Karl. "He is looking worse than ever," was the mental summary of the detective—"but what a nice face it is!"

Ay, it was. The pale, beautiful features, their refined expression, the thoughtfulness in the sweet grey eyes, and the strange sadness that pervaded every lineament, made a picture that was singularly attractive. Karl had one glove off; and the diamond and opal ring he always wore in remembrance of his father flashed in the sunlight. For the buff blinds were not down to-day. He had wished to give the ring back to his brother, when he found he had no right to it himself, but Adam had insisted upon his keeping it and wearing it, lest "the world might inquire where the ring was gone." Another little deceit, as it always seemed to Karl.

"I have called here, Mr. Burtenshaw, to ask you to answer me a question honestly. Have you—stay though," he broke off. "As you know me, I presume you know where I live?"

"Quite well, Sir Karl. I was there once in Sir Joseph Andinnian's time."

"Ay, of course you would know it. Now for my question. Have you sent a detective officer down to Foxwood after Philip Salter?"

"I have not," replied Mr. Burtenshaw, with, Karl thought, a stress upon the "I."

"But you know that one is there?"

"Why do you ask me this?" cried Mr. Burtenshaw, making no immediate reply.

"Because I have reason to believe, in fact to know, that a detective is at Foxwood, and I wish to ascertain what he is there for. I presume it can only be to search after Philip Salter."

"And what if it were?" asked Mr. Burtenshaw.

"Nothing. Nothing that could in any way affect you, I want to ascertain it, yes or no, for my own private and individual satisfaction."

"Well, you are right, Sir Karl. One of our men has gone down there with that object."

Karl paused. "I suppose *I* have led to it," he said. "That is, that it has been done in consequence of the inquiries I made of you."

"Of those you made of Grimley, sir, not of me. I had nothing to do with sending Tatton down—"

Karl caught at the name. "Tatton, do you call him?" he interrupted. And Mr. Burtenshaw nodded.

"He calls himself 'Strange' down there."

"Oh, does he? He knows what he is about, Sir Karl, rely upon it."

"Who did send him down?"

"Scotland Yard. It appears that Grimley, taking up the notion through you that he had found a clue to the retreat of Salter, went to Scotland Yard, announced that Salter was in hiding somewhere in the neighbourhood of Foxwood, and asked that a search should be set on foot for him."

Karl sat thinking. If the man Tatton went down after Philip Salter, what brought him within the grounds of the Maze, watching the house at night? Whence that endeavour to get in by day, and his questions to Ann Hopley? Was it Tatton who did this?—or were there two men, Strange and Tatton?

"What sort of a man is Tatton?" he asked aloud. "Slight and fair?"

"Slight and fair; about thirty years of age, Sir Karl. Curly hair."

"They must be the same," mentally decided Karl. "I presume," he said, lifting his head, "that Tatton must have started on this expedition soon after I was here last?"

"The following day, I think."

"Then he has been at Foxwood over long. More than long enough to have found Salter if Salter's there, Mr. Burtenshaw."

"That depends upon circumstances, Sir Karl," replied, the detective, with a wary smile. "I could tell you of a case where an escaped man was being looked after for twelve months before he was unearthed—and he had been close at hand all the while. They have as many ruses as a fox, these fugitives."

"Nevertheless, as Tatton has not yet found Salter, I should consider it a tolerably sure proof that Salter is not at Foxwood."

Mr. Burtenshaw threw a penetrating gaze at his visitor. "Will you undertake to give me your word, Sir Karl, that you do not *know* Philip Salter to be at Foxwood?"

"On my word and honour I do not know him to be there," said Karl decisively. "I should think he is not there."

He spoke but in accordance with his opinion. The conviction had been gaining upon him the last few minutes that he must have been in error in suspecting Smith to be the man. How else was it, if he was the man, that Tatton had not found him?

"Salter *is* there," said the detective—and Karl pricked up his ears to hear the decisive assertion. "We have positive information from Tatton that he is on his trail:—I am not sure but he has seen him. For the first week or two of Tatton's sojourn there, he could discover no trace whatever of the man or his hiding-place; but accident gave him a clue, and he has found both: found his hiding-place and found him."

"Then why does he not lay his hands upon him?" returned Karl, veering round again to the impression that it must be Smith.

"It is only a question of time, Sir Karl. No doubt he has good reasons for his delay. To *know* where a man is hiding may be one thing; to capture him quite another. Too much haste sometimes mars the game."

"Tatton is going to remain at Foxwood, then?"

"Until the capture is accomplished. Certainly."

Karl's heart sunk within him at the answer. While Tatton was delaying his capture of Smith, he might be getting a clue to another escaped fugitive down there—Adam Andinnian. Nay, had he not already the clue? Might not this very delay be caused by some crafty scheme to take both criminals at once—to kill two birds with one stone? He asked one more question.

"Mr. Burtenshaw, how was it that suspicion was directed at all to Foxwood?"

"Grimley took up the notion after your second visit here, Sir Karl, that you had a suspicion of Salter yourself. He fancied you were in the habit of seeing some one whom you thought, but did not feel quite

sure, might be Salter. And he judged that person, whether Salter or not, must be near your dwelling place—Foxwood."

Ay ; Karl saw how it was. *He* had done this. He, and no other, had brought this additional danger upon his ill-fated brother, whom he would willingly have given his own life to shield.

There was nothing more to be asked of Mr. Burtenshaw : he had learnt all he came to hear. And Sir Karl with his load of care got back to Foxwood by the evening train.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ANOTHER KETTLE-DRUM.

COMMOTION at Mrs. Jinks's. Another afternoon kettle-drum on a grand scale. The two pastors and more guests than could squeeze into the parlour. All the Foxwood ladies and an omnibus load or two from Basham.

Mr. Strange sat in his drawing-room on a three-legged stool : the one that supported Mrs. Jinks's tub on washing days. His chairs had been borrowed. He had good naturally given up every one ; so Mrs. Jinks introduced the wooden stool. These crowded meetings below had amused him at first ; but he was getting a little tired with the bustle and the noise. Every time the street door was knocked at, it shook his room ; the talking below could be heard nearly as plainly as though he were taking part in it. Still it made a little diversion in Mr. Strange's solitary existence, if only to watch the arrival of the articles needful for the feast, and to smell the aroma of the coffee, made in the kitchen in a huge kettle. The supplies did not concern Mr. Cattacomb : his gentle flock took that on themselves, cost and all. There was no lack of good things, but rather a super-abundance : since the Reverend Mr. Puff had come to augment the clerical force, the contributions had been too profuse. So that every one was in the seventh heaven of enjoyment and good humour, except Mrs. Jinks.

Perched on the hard stool, Mr. Strange, for lack of other employment, had noted the dainties as they came in. The wisest of us must unbend sometimes, even a great police detective. A basket of muffins full to the brim ; eleven sorts of jam—since it was discovered that the Reverend Guy loved preserves to satiety, the assortments had never failed ; thirteen kinds of biscuits, trays of cake, glass pots of marmalade and honey, ripe rich fruits of all tempting colours, chocolate creams, candied oranges.

Mr. Strange grew tired of looking ; his head ached with the noise, his eyes with the splendour of the ladies' dresses. For the company was arriving now, thick and three-fold.

There had arisen a slight, a very slight, modicum of displeasure at Mr. Cattacomb. That zealous divine had been met four or five times

walking with Mr. Moore's third daughter, Jemima ; at the last lecture, he had distinctly been seen manœuvring to get the young lady next to him. It gave offence. While he belonged to them all, all adored him ; but let him once single out one of them for favour more than the rest, and woe betide his popularity. "And that little idiot of a Jemima Moore, too, who had not two ideas in her vain head !" as Jane St. Henry confidentially remarked. However, the Reverend Guy, upon receiving a hint from Miss Blake that he was giving umbrage, vowed and protested that it was all accident and imagination—that he hardly knew Miss Jemima from her sisters. So peace was restored, and the kettle-drum grew out of it.

"I must have my chop all the same, Mrs. Jinks," said Mr. Strange to the widow ; who had come up stairs to ask the loan of his sugar tongs, and looked very red and excited over it.

"In course, sir, you shall have it. It might be ten minutes later, sir, than ord'nary, but I do hope you'll excuse it, sir, if it is. You see how I'm drove with 'em."

"I see that there seems to be a large company arriving."

"Company !" returned Mrs. Jinks, the word causing her temper to explode ; "I don't know how they'll ever get inside the room. I shall have to borrow a form from the school next door but one, and put it in the passage for some of 'em ; and, when that and the chairs is filled, the rest must stand. Never as long as I live will I take in a unmarried parson-gent again, if he's one of this here new sort that gets the ladies about him all day in church and gives drums out of it. Hark at the laughing ! Them two Parsons be in their glory."

"The ladies must be fond of drums, by their getting them up so frequently," remarked Mr. Strange.

"Drat the huzzies!—they'd be fond of fifes too if it brought 'em round Cattakin," was the widow's uncomplimentary rejoinder. "Better for 'em if they'd let the man alone to drink his tea in quiet and write his sermons—which I don't believe ever does get writ, seeing he never has a minute to himself. Hark at that blessed door !" she continued ; and indeed the knocking was keeping up a perpetual chorus. "If they'd only turn the handle they could come in of theirselves. I said so to the Miss St. Henrys one cleaning day that I had been called to it six times while scrubbing down the kitchen stairs, and the young ladies answered me that they'd not come in to Mr. Cattakin's without knocking, for the world."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Strange, slightly laughing.

"Hang that knocker again. There it goes ! And me with all the drum on my shoulders. You should see the muffins we've got to toast and butter downstairs, sir ; your conscience 'ud fail you. Betsey Chaffin has come in to help me, and she and the girl's at it like steam.

I'm afeared that there stool's terrible hard for you, Mr. Strange, sir!" spoke the widow as a parting condolence.

"It's not as soft as velvet," was the reply. "But I'm glad to oblige : and I am going out presently. Get my chop and tea up when you can."

Mrs. Jinks disappeared ; the hum continued. Whether the two parsons, as Mrs. Jinks surmised, felt "in their glory," cannot be told : the ladies were certainly in theirs. These kettle-drums at Mr. Cattacomb's were charmingly attractive.

When Mr. Strange did not return home for his chop at mid-day, he took it with his tea. His tray was yet before him when the kettle-drum trouped out to attend vespers. At least, the company who had formed the drum. The two reverend gentleman hastened on together a little in advance ; Miss Blake led the van behind ; and curious Foxwood ran to its windows to see.

Mr. Strange, who had nothing particular on his hands or mind that evening, looked after them. Example is infectious. He felt an inclination to follow in their wake—for it had not been his good fortune yet to make one of the worshippers at St. Jerome's ; he had never indulged himself with as much as a peep inside the place. Accordingly, Mr. Strange started, after some short delay, and gained the edifice.

The first object his eyes rested on struck him as being as ludicrous as an imp at the play. It was Tom Pepp in a conical hat tipped with red, and a red cross extending down his white garmented back. Tom Pepp stood near the bell, ready to tinkle it at parts of the service. It may as well be stated—lest earnest disciples of new movements should feel offence—that the form and make of the services at St. Jerome's were entirely Mr. Cattacomb's own ; invented by himself exclusively, and not copied from any other standard, orthodox or unorthodox ; and that the description is taken from facts. Mr. Strange, standing at the back near to Tom Pepp, enjoyed full view of all : the ladies prostrate on the floor, the Reverend Guy facing them with the whites of his eyes turned up ; Damon Puff on his knees, presenting his back to the room and giving every now and then a surreptitious stroke to his moustache. The detective had never seen so complete a farce in his life, as connected with religion. He thought the two reverend gentlemen might be shut up for a short term as mutinous lunatics, by way of receiving a little wholesome correction : he knew that if he had a daughter he would shut *her* up as one, rather than she should make a spectacle of herself as these other girls were doing.

The services over, Tom Pepp set on at the bell to ring them out with all his might—for that was the custom. Most of them filed out, as did Mr. Damon Puff ; and they went on their way. A few of them stopped in for confession to Mr. Cattacomb.

It was growing dusk then. A train was just in, and had deposited

some passengers at the station. One of them came along, walking quickly, as if in haste to get home. Happening to turn his head towards St. Jerome's as he passed it, he saw there, rather to his surprise, standing just outside the door, Mr. Moore's strong-minded sister. She peered at him in the twilight ; she was no longer so quick of sight as she had been ; and recognized Sir Karl Andinnian.

"What, is it you, Miss Diana!" he cried, stopping to hold out his hand. "Have you gone over to St. Jerome's?"

"I'd rather go over to Rome, Sir Karl," was the candid answer. "I may lapse to St. Jerome's when I get childish perhaps, if it lasts so long. There's no answering for any of us when the mind fails."

Sir Karl laughed slightly. He saw before him the receding crowd turning down towards Foxwood village, and knew that vespers must be just over. The ringing of Tom Pepp's bell would have told him that. It was clanging away just above Miss Diana's head.

"You have been to vespers, then," remarked Sir Karl again, almost at a loss what to say, and unable to get away until Miss Diana chose to release his hand.

"Yes, I have been to what they call vespers," she rejoined tartly, "more shame for a woman of my sober years to say it, as connected with this place! Look at them, trooping on there, that Puff in the midst, who is softer than any apple-puff ever made yet!" continued Miss Diana, pointing her hand in the direction of the vanishing congregation. "*They* have gone ; but there are five staying in for confession. Hark ! Hark, Sir Karl ! the folly is going to begin."

A sweet, silvery-toned bell rang gently within the room, and the clanging bell of Mr. Pepp stopped at the signal. The Reverend Guy had gone into the confessional box, and all other sounds must cease.

"I should think they can hardly see to confess at this hour," said Sir Karl jestingly.

"They light a tallow candle, I believe, and stick it in the vestry," said Miss Diana. "Five of them are staying to-night, as I told you : I always count. They go in one at a time and the others wait their turn outside the vestry. Do you think I am going to let my nieces stay here alone to play at that fun, Sir Karl? No : and so I drag myself here every confessional night. One of them, Jemima, is always staying. She's a little fool."

"It does not seem right," mused Sir Karl.

"Right!" ejaculated Miss Diana in an angry tone; as if she could have boxed his ears for the mild word. "It is wrong, Sir Karl, and doubly wrong. I do not care to draw the curb rein too tightly ; they are not my own children, and might rebel ; but as sure as they are living, if this folly of stopping behind to confess is to go on, I shall tell the doctor of it. I think, Sir Karl—and you must excuse me for saying

so to your face—that you might have done something before now to put down the pantomime of this St. Jerome's."

"Only this very morning I was with St. Henry, asking him what I could do," was the reply. "His opinion is, that it will cease of itself when the cold weather comes on."

"*Will it!*" was the sarcastically emphatic retort. "Not if Catacomb and the girls can help it. It's neither cold nor heat that will stop them!"

"Well, I am not sure about the law, Miss Diana. I don't know that St. Henry is, either."

"Look here, Sir Karl. If the law is not strong enough to put down these places, there's another remedy. Let all the clergy who officiate at them be upwards of fifty years old and *married*. It would soon be proved whether, or not, the girls go for the benefit of their souls."

Sir Karl burst into a laugh.

"It is these off-shoots of semi-religious places, started up here and there by men of vanity, some of whom are not licensed clergymen, that bring the shame and the scandal upon the true church," concluded Miss Diana, as she wished Sir Karl good evening and turned into the edifice again to watch over her niece Jemima.

Sir Karl strode onwards. He had just come home from his interview with Mr. Burtenshaw. Miss Diana Moore and her sentiments had served to divert his mind for a moment from his own troubles, but they were soon all too present again. The hum of the voices and sound of the footsteps came back to him from the crowd, pursuing its busy way to the village : he was glad to keep on his own solitary course and lose its echo.

Some one else, who had come out of St. Jerome's but who could not be said properly to pertain to the crowd, had kept on the solitary road—and that was Mr. Strange. He knew the others would take the direct way to the village and Mrs. Jinks's, and perhaps that was the reason why he did not. But there was no accounting for what Mr. Strange did : and one thing was certain—he had been in the habit lately of loitering in that solitary road a good deal after dusk had fallen, smoking his cigar there between whiles.

Sir Karl went on. He had nearly reached the Maze, though he was on the opposite side, when at a bend of the road there suddenly turned upon him a man with a cigar in his mouth, the red end of it glowing like a fire coal. The smoker would have turned his head away again, but Sir Karl stopped. He had recognized him : and his mind had been made up on the way from London, to speak to this man.

"I beg your pardon. Mr. Tatton, I think."

Mr. Tatton might possibly have been slightly taken to at hearing his own name : but there was no symptom of it in his voice or manner.

"The same, sir," he readily answered, taking the cigar from his mouth.

"I wish to say a few words to you. As well perhaps say them now as later."

"Better, sir. No time like the present: it's all we can make sure of."

"Perhaps you know me, Mr. Tatton?"

"Sir Karl Andinnian—unless I am mistaken," replied the detective, throwing away his cigar.

Sir Karl nodded, but made no assent in words. He would have given a portion of his remaining life to discern whether this man or law, whom he so dreaded, knew, or suspected, that he had not a right to the title.

"I have just come from London," pursued Sir Karl. "I saw Mr. Burtenshaw there to-day. Finding that you were down here, I wished to ascertain whether or not you had come here in search of one Philip Salter. And I hear that it is so."

The officer made no remark to this. It might be, that he was uncertain how far he might trust Sir Karl. The latter observed the reticence: guessed at the doubt.

"We may speak together in perfect confidence, Mr. Tatton. But for me, you would not have been sent here at all. It was in consequence of a communication I made myself, that the suspicion as to Salter reached Scotland Yard."

"I know all about that, Sir Karl," was the reply. "To tell you the truth, I should have made my presence here at Foxwood known to you at once, and asked you to aid me in my search; but I was warned at Scotland Yard that you might obstruct my work instead of aiding it, for that you wished to screen Salter."

"Scotland Yard warned you of that!" exclaimed Sir Karl.

"Yes. They had it from Grimley."

"The case is this," said Sir Karl, wishing with his whole heart he could undo what he had done. "I had a reason for making some inquiries respecting Philip Salter, and I went to my solicitors, Plunkett and Plunkett. They could not give me any information, and referred me to Mr. Burtenshaw. Burtenshaw introduced Grimley to me, and I saw them both twice. But I most certainly never intended to imply that Salter was in this neighbourhood, or to afford just grounds for sending down to institute a search after him."

"But I presume that you do know he is here, Sir Karl."

"Indeed I do not."

The officer was silent. He thought Sir Karl was intending to deceive him.

"I can tell you that he is here, Sir Karl—to the best of my belief. I could put out my hand at this minute and almost touch the dwelling that contains him."

They were nearly opposite the Maze gates, close upon the gate of

Clematis Cottage. Karl wondered, with an anxiety amounting to agony, which of the two dwellings was meant. It would be almost as bad for this man to take Salter as to take Adam Andinnian, since the capture of the former might lead direct to that of the latter.

"You say to the best of your belief, Mr. Tatton. You are not sure, then?"

"I am as sure as I can be, Sir Karl, short of actual sight."

"Good night, Sir Karl."

The interruption came from Mr. Smith, who was leaning over his gate, smoking a pipe. Karl returned the salutation and passed on.

"He seems to have a jolly kind of easy life of it, that agent of yours, Sir Karl?" remarked the officer.

"Do you know him?"

"Only by sight. I have seen Mr. Smith about on the land; and I took the liberty this afternoon, meeting him by chance near the Brook field, of asking him what the time was. The spring of my watch broke last night as I was winding it."

Karl's heart was beating. Had he been mistaken in supposing Philip Smith to be Philip Salter? Had he been nursing a foolish chimera, and running his head—or, rather, his poor brother's head—into a noose for nothing? God help him, then!

"You seem to know my agent well by sight," he breathed, in a tone kept low, lest its agitation should be heard.

"Quite well," assented the officer.

"Is he—does he bear any resemblance to Salter?"

"Not the least."

Karl paused. "You are sure of that?"

Tatton took a look at Sir Karl in the evening dusk, as if not able to understand him. "He is about the height of Salter, and in complexion is somewhat similar, if you can call that a resemblance. There is no other."

Karl spoke not for a few moments: the way before him was darkening. "You knew Salter well, I conclude?" he said presently.

"As well as I know my own brother."

Another pause; and then Karl laid his hand upon the officer's arm, bespeaking his best attention.

"I am sorry for all this," he said; "I am vexed to have been the cause of so much trouble. Your mission here may terminate as soon as you will, Mr. Tatton, for it is Smith that I was suspecting of being Salter!"

"No!" cried Tatton in surprised disbelief.

"On my solemn word, I assert it. I suspected my agent, Smith, to be Salter."

"Why, Sir Karl, I can hardly understand that. You surely could not suppose it to be within the bounds of probability that Philip Salter,

the fugitive criminal, would go about in the light of day in England as your agent goes—no matter how secluded the spot might be ! And five hundred pounds on his head !”

How a word of ridicule, of reason even, will serve to change our cherished notions ! Put as the cool and experienced police officer put it, Karl seemed to see how poor and foundationless his judgment had been.

“The cause of the affair was this,” he said, hoping by a candid explanation to disarm the suspicions he had raised. “A circumstance—I own it was but a slight one—put it into my head that Philip Smith, of whom I had known nothing until he came here a few month ago as my agent, might be the escaped prisoner Philip Salter. The idea grew with me, and I became anxious—naturally you will say—to ascertain whether there were any real grounds for it. With this view I went up to see if Plunkett’s people could give me any information about Salter or describe his person ; and they referred me to Mr. Burtenshaw.”

“Well sir?” interposed Tatton, who was listening attentively.

“I am bound to say that I obtained no corroboration of my suspicions, except in regard to the resemblance,” continued Sir Karl. “Burtenshaw did not know him ; but he summoned the man who had let him escape—Grimley. As Grimley described Salter, it seemed to me that it was the precise description of Smith. I came back here, strengthened in my opinion : but not fully confirmed. It was not a satisfactory state of things, and the matter continued to worry me. I longed to set it at rest, one way or the other ; and I went up again to town and saw Grimley and Mr. Burtenshaw. When I came back once more, I felt nearly as sure as a man can feel that it was Salter.”

“And yet you did not denounce him, Sir Karl. You would never have done it, I suppose ?”

“I should not,” admitted Sir Karl. “My intention was to tax him with it privately, and—and send him about his business. Very wrong and illegal of me, no doubt : but I have suffered too severely in my own family by the criminal law of the land, to give up another man gratuitously to it.”

At this reference to Sir Adam Andinnian, Mr. Tatton remained silent from motives of delicacy. He could understand the objection, especially from a refined, sensitive, and merciful natured man, as Sir Karl appeared to be.

“Well, sir, I can only say for myself that I wish your agent had been Salter : my hands would have been upon him before to-night. But is it true that you have no other suspicion ?”

“What suspicion ?”

“That the real Salter is in hiding at Foxwood.”

Karl’s heart beat a shade faster. “So far from having any suspicion of that kind, I am perfectly certain, now that you have proved to me

Smith is not Salter, that he is not at Foxwood. I know every soul in the place and around it."

"Were you acquainted with the real Salter, Sir Karl?"

"No."

"You take no interest in him, I presume?"

"None whatever."

During the conversation they had been slowly pacing onwards, had passed the Court gates, and were now fairly on the road to Foxwood. It seemed as if Sir Karl had a mind to escort Mr. Tatton to his home.

"By the way," he said, "why did you call yourself Strange down here?"

"I never did," answered Tatton, laughing slightly. "The widow Jinks gave me that name : I never gave it myself. I said to her I was a stranger, and she must have misunderstood me ; for I found afterwards that she was calling me Mr. Strange. It was rather convenient than otherwise, and I did not set it to rights."

Karl strolled on in silence, wondering how all this would end and whether this dangerous man—dangerous to him and his interests—was satisfied, and would betake himself to town again. A question interrupted him.

"Do you know much of a place here called the Maze, Sir Karl?"

"The Maze is my property. Why?"

"Yes, I am aware of that. What I meant to ask was, whether you knew much of its inmates."

"It is let to a lady named Grey. Her husband is abroad."

"That's what she tells you, is it ! Her husband is there, Sir Karl—if he be her husband. *That* is where we must look for Philip Salter."

Something born of emotion, of sudden fear, seemed to flash across Karl's eyes and momentarily blind him. A wild prayer went up for guidance, for help to confront this evil.

"Why do you say this?" he asked, his voice controlled to a calm indifference.

"I have information that some gentleman is living at the Maze in concealment, and I make no doubt it is Salter. The description of his person, so far as I have it, answers to him. Until to-night, Sir Karl, I have believed that it was to the Maze your own suspicions of Salter were directed.

"Certainly not—on my word of honour as a gentleman," was the reply. "I feel sure you are mistaken ; I know you are. Mrs. Grey lives alone at the Maze, save for her servants : two old people who are man and wife."

"I am aware that is the general belief. It's not true, though, for all that, Sir Karl."

"Indeed it is true," returned Karl, calmly as before, for he did not

dare to show too much zeal in the cause. "I have been over there pretty often on one matter or another—the house is an old one, and no end of repairs seem to be wanted to it—and I am absolutely sure that no inmate whatever is there, save the three I have mentioned. I do not count the infant."

"Ay ; there ; the infant. What does that prove ?"

"Nothing—as to your argument. Mrs. Grey only came to the place some five or six months ago. Not yet six, I think."

"Rely upon it, Sir Karl, the lady has contrived to blind you, in spite of your visits, just as she has blinded the outside world. Some one is there, concealed ; and I shall be very much surprised if it does not turn out to be Salter. As to the two old servants, they are bound to her interests ; are of course as much in the plot as she is."

"I know you are mistaken. I could stake my life that no one else is there. Surely you are not going to act on this idea !"

"I don't know," replied Mr. Tatton craftily. "Time enough. Perhaps I may get some other information before long. Should I require a search warrant to examine the house I shall apply to you, Sir Karl. You are in the commission of peace, I believe."

Sir Karl nodded. "If you must have one, I shall be happy to afford it," he said, remembering that if it came to this pass, his being able to avert the Maze privately beforehand, would be a boon. And, with that, they separated : the detective continuing to pace onwards towards Paradise Row, Sir Karl turning back to his own house.

But the events of the evening, as concerning the Maze interests, were not altogether at an end. Miss Blake was the last to come out of the confessional, for the rest had taken their turn before her. It was tolerably late then ; quite dark ; and both Aunt Diana and Tom Pepp were boiling over with indignation at being kept so long. They all turned out of St. Jerome's together, including Mr. Cattacomb ; and all, save Miss Blake and the boy, went in the direction of the village. Tom Pepp, having locked up and doffed his bell-ringing garments, proceeded the other way, accompanied by Miss Blake.

She was going to visit a sick woman who lived next door to Tom's mother. Miss Blake had her good points, though she was harsh of judgment. This poor woman, Dame Bell, was dying of consumption ; the end was drawing near, and Miss Blake often went to sit by and read to her. The boy had told her at vespers that night that it was thought she could hardly live till morning : hence the late visit.

It was striking ten when Miss Blake quitted the cottage : she heard the quarters and the strokes told out from the distant church at Foxwood. The night was a still one. Tom Pepp, waiting outside, gallantly offered to attend her home. She accepted the escort readily, not caring to go alone so late as that.

"But I fear it will be keeping your mother up, Tom," she hesitated. "I know you go to bed early."

"That's nothing, um," said Tom. "Mother have got her clothes from the wash to fold to-night. She telled me I was not to let you go back alone. It have been a rare good day for drying."

So they set off together, talking all the way, for Tom was an intelligent companion and often had items of news to regale the public with. When they came within view of the Maze gates and Clematis Cottage, the loneliness of the way was over, and Miss Blake sent the lad back again, giving him a threepenny-bit.

She was on the Maze side of the way, not having crossed since leaving Mrs. Bell's cottage. And she had all but reached the gates; when the sound of advancing footsteps grew upon her ear. Drawing back amidst the trees—not to watch for Sir Karl Andinnian as she had watched at other times, for she believed him to be in London, but simply to shield herself from observation as it was so late—Miss Blake waited until the footsteps should have gone by.

The footsteps halted at the gate: and she, peeping through the leaves, saw it was Sir Karl. He took the key from his pocket as usual, opened the gate, locked it after him, and plunged into the maze. Miss Blake heaved a sigh at man's inventions, and kept still until there was no fear that her rustling away would be heard. Then she moved.

She had never been in all her life so near screaming. Taking one step forward to depart, she found herself right in the arms of somebody who had coat sleeves on; another watcher like herself.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am."

"Good gracious, Mr. Strange, how you frightened me! Whatever are you doing here?"

"Nay, I may ask what you were doing," was the smiling retort. "On your way home, I take it. As for me, I was smoking my cigar, and it has gone out. That was our friend, Sir Karl Andinnian, I fancy, who let himself in there."

"Oh yes it was Sir Karl," was the contemptuous answer, given as they walked on together. "It is not the first night by a good many he has been seen stealing in at those gates."

"Paying his court to Mrs. Grey!" returned Mr. Strange, really speaking without any sinister motive.

Miss Blake, in the honest indignation of her heart, and just come from the upright exhortations of the Reverend Guy, allowed her sentiments their play. Mr. Strange's remark, made in all innocence, had seemed to show her that he too knew of the scandal.

"It is shameful!" she said. "Doubly shameful in Sir Karl, a married man."

Mr. Strange pricked up his ears. He caught her meaning instantly.

"Nonsense!" said he.

"I wish it was nonsense," said Miss Blake. "When the woman, Chaffen, was telling the tale in your rooms that day, of the gentleman she saw, and whom she could never see afterwards, I could hardly contain myself, dear sir, knowing it was Sir Karl."

"And—and—do you mean—do you think that there's no Mr. Grey there—no gentleman inmate, I would say?" cried the detective, surprised for once.

"Mr. Grey!" she repeated, scoffingly. "The only 'Mr. Grey' that exists is Sir Karl Andinnian; I have known it a long while. One or two others here know it also. It is a sad scandal."

She wished him good night with the last words, crossed the road, and let herself into the grounds of the Court by one of the small gates. Leaving Mr. Strange looking after her like a man in a dream, as he tried to solve the problems set a working in his brain.

(*To be continued.*)



THE SAILORS.

From THEOPHILE GAUTIER.

O'ER the water's vast profound
 Merrily the ship has sped,
 Girdling all the world around
 With a track of silvery thread—
 From swart India's burning ground,
 Where the sunlit breakers roll,
 To the ice-clad, frozen pole.

Stars are shining, pointing brightly
 With their little hands of gold,
 Telling to our helmsman rightly
 Whitherward the course to hold ;
 While our canvas wings blow lightly,
 Like the swallows, swiftly free,
 Brushing o'er the splashing sea.

Even as we fly and roam,
 We are whispering one another
 Of the early loves of home,
 Of the hearthside, and the mother ;
 But the ever-surgeing foam,
 With its soothing, sweet refrain,
 Lulls the burden of our pain.

Toilfully the peasants wield
 On the earth their pick and spade,
 But our boundless azure field
 By our ploughing keel is made
 Rich and fertile, till it yield
 Of its garner'd wealth, I trow,
 Store of pearls and gems enow.

What a glorious life is this !
 Cradled in our drifting nest,
 Living in the black abyss,
 On Infinity's own breast ;
 On a pathless sea which is
 Desert, where no foot hast trod,
 Marching step by step with God !

H. CURWEN.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

IT is very difficult to get even a correct outline of the figure of Geoffrey Chaucer. We think we have a perfect view of him; we congratulate ourselves upon knowing the man just as he moved and spoke among his contemporaries; when suddenly we discover that we are looking at a puppet cunningly dressed up by some imaginative biographer. We believe that we have got him into a good historical light, when all at once a doubt whether he was or was not an actor in such and such events throws him again into shadow. We try to conjure him up, but he comes in so many forms that we grow utterly bewildered. Yet, notwithstanding all this, we reverence him so deeply and love him so dearly that we cannot help striving to gain some idea of what he was like.

The dates given of Chaucer's birth are very varied, and range from 1328 to 1348. Probably some year midway between these two may be the right one. The accounts of his parentage are just as uncertain. Some give him a vintner for a father, some a merchant, and some a knight. In our opinion the former of these is the most likely origin for Geoffrey Chaucer. His rich but broad humour seems as if it must have sprung from the merry, vigorous heart of the common people, and the variety of characters depicted in the "Canterbury Tales" proves that he must have mixed with all sorts of men and women both high and low. In after life he was familiar with courts, and knights and ladies, but we fancy that in his youth he must have known intimately the cook, the wife of Bath, and the yeoman.

Wherever his cradle may have stood, it was a deeply interesting period of English history into which little Geoffrey was born. Chivalry had not yet become a mere dream. The Church of Rome still sat enthroned in England and saw men bow before her stately ritual, and listen in rapt devotion to her siren melodies. Yet with all this there was in the land a silent undercurrent which was just beginning to stir, and which (before the child that now wore his swaddling clothes in his to us unknown home should lie in his coffin) was to burst forth in the preaching of Wickliffe, and the insurrection of Wat Tyler. Those two great movements, religious and political, must have been already faintly visible in the daily surroundings of the boy, and must have mingled strangely with his fancies as he dreamed over some old romance or saintly legend. Even as his mother told him the wonderful story of "St. Margaret and the Monster," he may have heard her whisper timidly to some sister or friend the wish that she could teach her son more of what was in that Book which had hitherto been a sealed

volume for the unlearned, but which (in spite of all that priest or friar might say) the people were beginning dimly to guess would show them the Light of the world, not in a glass darkly, as they knew Him in the Lives of the saints and martyrs, but face to face as a man knows his friend. Even while the lad read by his home fireside of wizard cave or distressed damsel lost in lone woodland, he may have been drawn away from fiction to listen to his father and some neighbour talk with bated breath but in threatening tones, of the heavy hand of the Plantagenet.

Thus the two streams of the ideal and the real which seem always to have flowed through Chaucer's mind may have had their sources in very early boyhood. The only certain thing known about Chaucer's birth is that he was a native of London. From this fact we may reasonably suppose that he may often, with other children of his own age, have loitered around an inn door, where a party of pilgrims was setting out for the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, or some equally popular place of devotion, and that a youthful remembrance of this kind may in later life have determined the plan of his greatest work.

Whoever Chaucer's father may have been, he certainly gave him a very liberal education. His writings show that Chaucer was a good scholar, both in the classics and in divinity, and that according to the ideas of the fourteenth century, he was far advanced in astronomy and the other sciences. Tradition says that he studied at both Cambridge and Oxford. This is not at all unlikely, for we find that reading young men of that day did sometimes really go from one University to the other. When he had finished his education in England, Chaucer went to Paris. There he may have gained that grace of carriage and manner for which he is said to have been always so remarkable. We can picture to ourselves the handsome, free-spirited young fellow, with his ruddy Saxon face and ready Saxon wit, in the joyous capital of fair France ; now whispering pretty nothings into the dainty ear of some dark-eyed grisette, now going home through the streets at day-break, with a band of merry companions, shouting out in questionable French-a jolly chorus ; and now riding gaily forth to see how in a foreign land they understood the art of woodcraft. No doubt he sowed at this period a tolerable crop of wild oats, but at the same time he began to plant his laurels. He wrote very early his first long poem, "The Court of Love." This, like most of his earlier writings, is full of allegory and imagery. Though very gorgeous in colouring, and often literally overflowing with rich fancy, these first poems are rather wanting in the human interest of the "Canterbury Tales."

On his return to England Chaucer for a little while studied law. To judge by the only incident related of his legal life, he by no means entirely buried himself among musty old documents and ponderous volumes.

One afternoon, as young Chaucer was passing through the Temple with his temper made a little more irritable than usual, it may be by the heat of the sun, it may be by an additional cup of sack, it may be by the thought of an especially stiff piece of reading which was before him, it may be by all three together, he met a Friar. The priest came along with easy step and shining, rosy face, rejoicing at once in the odour of sanctity and of a good dinner. The sight of this placidly lazy and provokingly comfortable churchman had upon the man of law the same effect that the sight of a sleek tabby has upon a terrier. In two minutes Master Geoffrey had jostled against the Friar and contrived to pick a quarrel with him. Hereupon followed a lively game at single-stick, in which, no doubt, Chaucer's fellow students backed loudly the law against the church. At first the Friar showed himself no mean hand with the quarter-staff. But by degrees he began to give way before his more active antagonist, and when the fray was over the churchman had learned in good earnest what was meant by the strong arm of the law; young Chaucer was, however, afterwards punished for his misdeed, by being brought before a magistrate, reprimanded, and fined as a breaker of the peace; all of which could not exactly have added to the respectability of the legal brotherhood. Soon after this Chaucer gave up the law, which was in truth entirely unsuited to him.

By some means, perhaps through the good offices of a friend, he now contrived to get introduced at Court, where his winning face and tongue quickly brought him into favour with the royal family. John of Gaunt, King Edward's third son, who was then not the "time honoured Lancaster" of after days, but a gay young prince, took a special fancy to Chaucer. Prince and subject were, without doubt, well agreed in the way they liked to amuse themselves, and probably they carried on many a wild frolic together. This early intimacy ripened into a solid friendship, which lasted throughout their lives.

After a while John of Gaunt determined to become a steady married man. A rich bride was found for him in Blanche the heiress of Lancaster. She was a gentle lady, who yielded up readily to her princely husband the revenues and the other privileges which were hers as a countess in her own right; and who after a few years of quiet married life, spent chiefly at her northern castle, passed away softly from the earth, without dreaming that her son was to be the future king of England, and that her family title was in after days to become the watch-word on many a bloody field of civil strife.

In honour of Prince John's marriage, Chaucer wrote "The Parliament of Birds," and in memory of Blanche's death "The Book of the Duchess." Chaucer seems to have had a true reverence and affection for the sweet household virtues and the wifely truth of this lady. The remembrance of her may perhaps have first suggested to him the image

of Griselda. These two poems, connected as they were with the royal family, confirmed Chaucer's reputation as a writer of verse; and men and women began to point him out to each other and talk about him. In those days, however, it was quite impossible for any man to make literature his profession, and all his life, therefore, he could only take poetry as the business of his leisure hours. Then, no doubt, he really worked at it more than at the employment by which he lived; and no doubt also, as he went about through the world, he was always learning something for his art. If this had not been the case, the name of Chaucer would not be what it now is in English literature.

At about this period Edward the Third set off for one of his many warlike expeditions into France. Young Chaucer, who was ready for everything, and who perhaps thought he should like to see a little of a soldier's life, entered the army and followed the king.

The bold, reckless joys of a campaign must have suited him well. What wonderful stories must he have woven for his companions, as they sat round the camp fires! What a light must have flashed into his eyes, as the trumpet-call to battle rang through the ranks! What a generous, genial victor must he have been when he was billeted on some conquered foe!

But the young soldier's experiences were not to be all of nights spent beneath clear starlit skies, and cheery communing with his comrades and the eager glow of battle. Through an unlucky chance of war Chaucer was taken prisoner.

His prepossessing manners, and his knowledge of the French language and customs, gained during his stay in Paris, probably, made his captivity a very easy one. But he had to sit still with folded hands while his countrymen were fighting, and in this season of forced inactivity he had time to repent past follies and to make good resolves for the future. At length, through an exchange of prisoners, the poet was set free. After that he never tried a soldier's life again, having most likely had quite enough of it.

Soon after his return to England, he got an appointment about the Court which brought him a settled income. He now began to think of making himself a home. Among those who followed in the train of Edward's queen, Philippa, when she came to England, were a certain knight of Hainault called Roet and his two little daughters. These children were now grown up into very comely young women. One, Catherine, had married an English gentleman called Swynford. The other, Philippa, was maid of honour to the queen. According to Fanny Burney, a maid of honour has quite enough to do in the labours of dressing her mistress and herself; yet this industrious damsels, Philippa Roet, found spare time sufficient (between the business of clasping on jewels and arranging gracefully royal mantles, and contriving how to make an old dress look new) to fall in love with

Geoffrey Chaucer, and, what was more, to make the poet desperately in love with herself.

What a sweet, sly, piquante courtship that must have been! What stolen meetings at dawn in the palace garden among the dew-drenched flowers, before their majesties were awake! What brief, tender whispers in moonlit galleries while torches blazed and music clashed in the ball-room hard by! What frequent dropping of sonnets at her chamber-door, when she watched, though all else slept. What soft little pressures of the hand when the queen was looking another way, as no doubt she very often purposely did: for never did a kindlier hearted lady, or one more ready to smooth the path of true love, sit on the throne of merry England than Philippa of Hainault.

There being no impediment in the way, and the king and queen forwarding the matter, Chaucer and his Philippa were soon made man and wife. Not long after their marriage they had the misfortune to lose their generous mistress the queen. Edward the Third, however, still treated Chaucer with favour. He made him one of the valets of his bedchamber and also gave him a high office in the customs. The two halves of his life must now have been strangely different. One was spent among velvet doublets, and waving plumes, and gilded armour, and all the many splendid vanities of a Court; the other among heavy ledgers, and hard-handed sea captains, and casks of coarse spirit, and the most vulgar realities of common-place life. No wonder that a man whose time was passed among such contrasts should write by turns of a noble knight and a miller.

Several times King Edward sent Chaucer abroad on political missions. This is a great proof of the high esteem in which his master held him. In one of these journeys he went into Italy and saw the Mediterranean wash the marble quays of Genoa, and the stately towers of fair Florence raise themselves towards the blue sky. On this occasion, some of his biographers think, he visited Petrarch. This notion is, however, only founded on a passage in the "Canterbury Tales": it is therefore our opinion that Chaucer, anxious as he must have been to despatch quickly the king's business, would hardly have spared time to go to Arqua where Petrarch then lived, and that those who draw from the passage in question the inference that the two great poets must have met are, as blundering critics often do, confounding the author with his characters. One of Chaucer's personages says that he heard a story he is about to tell from Petrarch; but that is no reason for concluding that Chaucer so heard it himself.

Rich must have been the store of dramatic anecdote and lively description which Chaucer brought home from these journeys. In those days of little travelling an account of foreign countries must have had freshness and interest, even when it came from a common-place man. What then must it have been on the lips of Chaucer?

In one of his absences, Chaucer's brother-poet Gower filled for him his post at Court. This is a delightful proof of the friendship which must have existed between the two. Many a ramble must they have taken together through the green fields in summer time, and many a flask of canary must have passed between them on winter evenings. Could the diary of Philippa Chaucer have been published after her death, as most certainly it would have been in this century, it would doubtless have contained conversations as interesting as those in the pages of Boswell.

Chaucer constantly received proofs of King Edward's favour. At one time a pitcher of wine was sent daily to the poet by his sovereign, and when this was discontinued he was given an equivalent in money. Late in life a close connection was formed between the families of Chaucer and of his old friend John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Philippa Chaucer's sister, Catherine Swynford, who became early a widow, entered the Duke of Lancaster's household as governess to the children of his first duchess.

John's second wife was Constance of Castille. This haughty Spanish princess was a very different wife from the meek Blanche. She often made the grand saloons of their palace so much too hot for poor Prince John that he was obliged to fly for a little refreshment into his stables or into the schoolroom, where Mistress Swynford was teaching his children. By degrees he got to find that the governess could comfort him better than his favourite hunter, and by degrees, also, he contracted the habit of always sending the little scholars out to play whenever he entered the schoolroom. The result was such as might have been expected. Catherine Swynford became first the Duke's mistress, and after the death of Constance, which took place in a few years, his wife.

Thus Chaucer and John of Gaunt were, through marriage, very nearly connected. We must not blame Chaucer too harshly for seeming not to censure the misconduct of his sister-in-law and the Duke. We must recollect the lax manners of the time. Besides, Chaucer and his family could not afford to lose so powerful a patron as the Duke of Lancaster.

The poet's own domestic life seems to have been very happy. Philippa appears to have been to him a bold and faithful helpmate in his journey through this world; and we believe that, could we trace closely her household influence, we should find that she first began to work the golden thread of religion into his life: for, notwithstanding that great coarseness which unluckily makes the "Canterbury Tales" unavailable as a book for family reading, but which we must chiefly impute to the customs of his age, Chaucer was, in the main, a religious man, and his poems are, in the main, religious poems. Chaucer was certainly a good father, and attended as far as he could to the educa-

tion of his boys. His "Astrolabe," a work on astronomy, was written for his little Lewis, who was probably his father's pet.

On Richard the Second coming to the throne Chaucer got somewhat into trouble, through his leaning towards the side of the people in the civil broils which disturbed the early part of that king's reign. Some of the poet's biographers say he was so violent in his partisanship that he was obliged to fly from the wrath of government to Holland; but this is most decidedly a myth. Chaucer's nature was not of that stuff of which martyrs are made. He certainly, it is true, inclined to the popular cause. His friend and patron the Duke of Lancaster was the chief leader of the liberal party. No doubt the poet disliked tyranny in any form, and no doubt he wished to see the Church of Rome purged from her worst abuses. Very likely, also, he may have sometimes gone privately to hear Wickliffe preach, and his heart may have been drawn towards the new doctrines. But most assuredly he showed his feelings and opinions in a very mild, cautious way, and the only sign of the king's displeasure was a temporary stoppage of the pension which Chaucer had for some years received.

This must have made Chaucer and his Philippa, in the decline of life, know what straitened means were like; but doubtless cheery wit and merry smiles made home music and home light around the scantily spread table. Afterwards, however, the pension was restored.

Of the "Canterbury Tales," that vast storehouse of humour, of pathos, of fancy, and of strong, manly common-sense, we have no space to speak here. They were the work of his ripened powers in middle age, and probably the old man was still busy with them when he heard the whisper which called him to his rest.

ALICE KING.



A DAY OF PLEASURE.

WE all liked Captain Sanker ; a post-captain in the navy, ages since on half-pay ; who had brought a letter of introduction to the Squire when he came into Worcestershire. He was about a seventeenth cousin of the Sankers of Wales, and a twenty-seventh of Mrs. Todhetley. The captain and his wife and family had lived in different cheap places, Ireland and the Channel Islands, making both ends of their income meet as well as they could—and nobody needs to be told how poor is the half-pay of naval officers, and what a fight and struggle it is to rub along. At last, through the death of a relative of Mrs. Sanker, they dropped into quite a fortune, and came over to settle at Worcester.

A Dr. Teal, who had also recently come to Worcester, and was an old friend of Captain Sanker, proposed it. He wrote a flaming account of the pretty place that Worcester was, of the loveliness of the surrounding country ; and of the great advantage the college school would be to the young Sankers, in giving them a free education, if they could be got into it. The prospect of a free education for his boys took with the captain, and he lost no time in removing to Worcester, the Welsh Sankers giving him the introduction to us. We grew pretty intimate : calling on them when we went to Worcester for a day, and having them over to spend days with us.

All the young Sankers were got into the college school by degrees, and became four of the forty King's scholars. At that time, it is long past now, the school was not thought much of, for the boys were taught nothing but the classics, so entrance was easy, Latin, Greek, bad writing, and the first rule in arithmetic : there it ended. Captain Sanker thought the education first-rate, and got them all enrolled : Frederick, Daniel, King, and Toby. As to Toby, I fancy his real name was Alfred, but I never heard him called by it.

They had been in Worcester between one and two years, when Tod and I went over on a visit. The captain had come to spend a summer's day at Crabb Cot, and in his jolly, open-hearted fashion insisted on taking us two back. He was a short, stout man, with grey hair, and merry bright blue eyes all alight with smiles. The college school would be breaking up for its long holidays in a week or so, and it would have been better for us to have gone then ; but the captain always did things on impulse, and had no more forethought than young Toby. The holidays were taken late that year, and would be very long, because the college hall, which was the schoolroom, would be wanted for the music-meeting in September.

The Sankers' was a funny household, and we pitched down amidst them without ceremony on either side. The house was near an open road, not very far from the cathedral. It was a commodious house as far as size went ; but all the rooms were in an everlasting litter, so that you could not often get a chair to sit down on. The captain was good-humoured always, going in and out a hundred times a day. There seemed to be no fixed hours for meals and sometimes no meals to eat : Mrs. Sanker would forget to order them. She was a little lady who went about as if she were dreaming, in a white petticoat and buff jacket ; or else she'd be sitting aloft in the turret, darning stockings and saying poetry. She was the least excitable person I ever knew ; all events, good and bad, she took as a matter of course : had the house caught fire she'd have looked on quietly—as Nero did when Rome was burning. Why they called the room the turret did not appear. It had a great beam running through it on the floor: and Mrs. Sanker would sit on that, reading poetry to us or telling her dreams, her light hair all down.

At seven o'clock the boys had to be in school. Being summer weather, that was no hardship. At nine they came in again with a rush, wild for breakfast. If Mrs. Sanker was not down to give it them, the four boys would set on and eat up the piles of bread and butter ; upon which Hetta Sanker would call them tigers, and go to the kitchen to tell the maids to cut more. Which was the cook of the two servants and which the housemaid, they did not themselves seem to know : both did the work indiscriminately. Breakfast over, the boys went out again ; Tod and I with them. At ten they must be in school. At one they came home to dinner ; it might be ready, or it might not : if not, they'd go in and polish off anything cold that might be in the larder. It didn't seem to spoil their dinners. Afternoon school again until four o'clock ; and then at liberty for good. Tea was at any time ; a scrambling kind of meal that stayed on the table for hours, and was taken just as we chanced to go in for it. Jam and boiled eggs would be on the table, with the loaf and butter ad libitum. Sometimes toast and dripping, and there used to be a scuffle for that. As to the dinner, when Mrs. Sanker forgot it, the servants would bring in a big dish of poached eggs, and we made it up with bread and cheese. Or Dan or Toby would be sent tearing off to High Street for a lot of penny porkpies and apple-tarts. At night we had prayers, which the captain read.

Now I daresay that to people accustomed to a domestic life like clock-work, this would have been unbearable. Tod and I thought it delightful. It was like a perpetual picnic. But it was out of one of the dinnerless episodes we found out that Captain Sanker had a temper. Generally speaking, he took disasters with equanimity.

It was on a Thursday. We were to have had four ducks for dinner, which the captain had bought at market the day before. Fine big ducks that he was proud of : he carried them home himself, and

brought them into the parlour to show us. On the Thursday Tod and I had been inside the Town Hall all the morning, listening to a trial before the magistrates—some fellow who had stolen his neighbour's clothes—props and cut them up for firewood. We got home just as the boys and their books did, as hungry as they were. There was no cloth laid, and Fred shouted out for Biddy, asking whether we were to dine to-day or to-morrow. Biddy heard, and came rushing in with the cloth and knife-tray.

"What's for dinner besides the four ducks?" asked Dan. "Any pudding? Have you put plenty of stuffing?"

"Indeed then, and I don't think there's much for dinner," replied Biddy. "I've been in the turret with the missis all the morning, helping to stuff a pillow."

She laid the cloth, and Mrs. Sanker came mooning down in the short white petticoat, darning a sock of Dan's. The dreadful truth came out—busy over beds and pillows, nobody had thought of dinner, and the ducks were hanging in the larder, uncooked. Before speechless tongues could find words, Captain Sanker came in, bringing his friend Dr. Teal to taste the ducks. All the Teals were as intimate at the house as we were. Years before, when the captain was a middy, Dr. Teal had been assistant surgeon on the same ship.

"They've got a cold dinner at Teal's to-day," said the captain to his wife, as she was shaking hands with the doctor, "so he is come to share ours. Fine ducks, they are, Teal!"

Then the news had to be told. The ducks were not cooked: dinner altogether had been forgotten.

I saw Captain Sanker's face turn white; quite white; but he did not say a word. Dr. Teal—a scientific Scotchman, who walked with his nose in the air and his spectacles turned to the skies, as if always looking for a lunar rainbow—made the best of it. Laughing, he said he would come in another day, and went out.

Then it began. Captain Sanker gave vent to passion in a way that startled me and made Tod stare. I don't believe he knew for a few moments what he was doing or saying. Nora, the other servant—both girls had come with them from Ireland, and were as thoughtless as their mistress—came in with a dish of some hastily concocted pudding: a kind of batter. The captain, who had still his stick in his hand, lifted it, and spattered the pudding all about the cloth. Then he stamped out of the house with a bang.

"Sit down, dears," said Mrs. Sanker, not at all moved, as she began to collect the pudding with a spoon. "Bring in the cheese, Nora, and do some eggs. Here's a corner seat for you, Johnny; can you squeeze in? The captain will have his dinner with the Teals, no doubt. He has been tasting the doctor's port wine, I think: or he'd not have been so put up."

And somehow we gathered, then or later, that the captain was easy as an old glove at all times and over all crosses, unless he was a little "put up" by artificial help. He told us himself one day (not, of course, alluding to anything of this) that he had had naturally an awful temper, would go into passions of absolute madness for a minute or two, when he was younger ; but that he had by much self-restraint chiefly if not quite subdued it. It was true : and the temper never need be feared now unless he took anything to excite him. Dan had the same temper ; but without the good nature. And they said Hetta had : but we saw nothing of it in her. Hetta was eighteen, a nice looking girl, who was governess to little Ruth ; or pretended to be ; but Ruth would manage to escape her lessons five days in the week.

At the time of this visit of ours to Worcester, the college school was in a ferment. Between the Cathedral and St. Peter's Church was situated a poor district called Frog Lane. It had been rechristened Diglis Street, but was mostly called by the old name still. Crowded houses, narrow streets, noise and dirt—that's how the place struck me. The inhabitants were chiefly workmen belonging to the glove and china manufactories of the town. In this district was the parish school, always filled with boys, sons of the working-men, and under the superintendence of Mr. Jones, the portly parish clerk. Now, there was wont to spring up from time to time a tide of animosity between these boys and the boys of the college school. Captain Sanker said it was the fault of the college boys : had they let the St. Peter's boys alone St. Peter's would never have interfered with them : but they could be downright contemptuous and overbearing when they pleased. They scornfully called the St. Peter's boys the Frogs ; "charity boys ;" and the Frogs retorted by calling them the College Caws—after the rooks that had their homes in the old trees of the college green and kept up a perpetual cawing. The animosity generally ended in a battle ; and then hostilities would be dropped for months, perhaps years. One of these quarrels was going on while we were at Worcester ; it had kept both schools in a ferment for some weeks, and there was every sign of a culminating fight. Of course we went in, heart and soul, with the King's scholars : but the boys on both sides held a code of honour—if you can call it so—that no stranger must take part in the engagements. The college boys were only forty, all told ; the Frogs seemed to number four times as many.

Skirmishes took place daily—the scene of them being the top of Edgar Street. St. Peter's boys (let out of school at twelve, whereas the others did not get out till one), would collect in the narrow neck of their district opening on Edgar Street, and wait for the enemy. As soon as the college boys' steps were heard racing under the dark gateway of Edgar Tower, hisses and groans began. "Caw, caw, caw ! Hiss, hiss, hiss ! How's your Latin to-day?—what birchings has you

had? Calls yourselves gents does you, you College Caws? You daredn't come on fair, and fight it out with us, you Caws. Caw, caw, caw!" Sometimes the college boys would pass on, only calling back their contemptuous retorts ; sometimes they'd halt, and a fierce battle of abuse would be interchanged, to the edification of Edgar Street in general and the clerks in Mr. Clifton's Registry Office. " You beggarly Frogs ! We don't care to soil our hands with you ! Had you been gentlemen, we'd have polished you off long ago and sent you into next week. Croak, Frogs! Croak !" Not a third of the college boys need have taken Edgar Tower on their way home ; through the cloisters would have been their direct way ; but they came to meet the Frogs. Once in a way there'd be a single combat ; but as a rule nothing came of it but the abuse. When that was exhausted, each lot would rush home their separate ways : the Frogs back down Frog Lane ; the others up the steps, or onwards down Edgar Street : and remain apart till the same hour next day.

I've not said much yet about King Sanker. He was lame : something was wrong with his knee. Gatherings would come in it, and then he'd be in bed for weeks together. He was nearly thirteen then ; next to Dan: and Dan was over fourteen. King was a nice little fellow with mild eyes as blue as the captain's : Fred would order him to keep "out of the ruck" in the skirmishes with the Frogs, and he mostly did. If it came to a fight, you see, King might have been hurt ; he had no fighting in him, was frightened at it, and he could not run much. King was just like his mother in ideas : he would tell us his dreams as she did, and recite pieces of poetry a mile long. Dan and King slept together in the room next to ours ; it was in the garret, close to the turret-room. King would keep us awake singing ; sometimes chants, sometimes hymns, sometimes songs. They'd have let him try for the choir ; but the head master of the college school thought his knee would not do for it.

It was Saturday, and a pouring wet afternoon. Our visit was drawing to an end : on the following Wednesday we should bid the Sankers good-bye. Captain Sanker, always trying to find out ways of making folks happy, had devised a day of pleasure for the last day, Tuesday. We were to go to Malvern, a whole lot of us ; ourselves, and the Teals, and the Squire, and Mrs. Todhetley, and eat our dinner on the hill. It was so settled ; and the arrangements were planned and made.

But this was Saturday. We dined at twelve : whether for anybody's convenience or that the servants made a mistake in an hour, I don't remember. It happened to be a saint's day, so the boys had no school ; and, being wet, came home after morning service. After a jolly dinner of peas and bacon and pancakes, we looked at the skies for a bit, and then (all but Fred and Hetta) went up to the turret-room. Dan said the rain had come to spite us ; for the whole school had meant to race

to Berwick's Bridge after afternoon service and hold a mock review in the fields there. It was coming down in torrents, peppering the roof and the windows. Mrs. Sanker sat in the middle of the old beam, mending one of Toby's shirts, Lalla Rookh open on her knee, out of which she was singing softly, the floor strewed with patches, and scissors, and tapes, and the combs out of one side of her hair.

"Read it out loud to us, mamma," cried King.

"I can't awhile to read, King," she said. "Look here,"—holding out the work all rags and tatters. "If I don't mend this, Toby won't have a shirt to put on to-morrow."

"I shan't mind about that," said Toby.

"Oh, but, dear, I don't think you could go without a shirt. Has anybody seen my cotton?"

"Then say over something to us that you know, mamma," returned King, as Toby found the cotton.

"Very well. I can do that, and work too. Sit down, all of you."

We sat down ; King and Toby on the floor before her, the rest of us on the beam on either side her. Dan, who did not care for poetry, got some Brazil nuts out of his pocket and cracked them while he listened.

Mrs. Sanker might as well have read *Lalla Rookh*. She began to recite "The Friar of Orders Grey." But what with gazing up at the sky through the rain to give it due emphasis, and shaking her head at pathetic parts, the sewing did not get on. She had finished the verse—

"Weep no more, lady, weep no more ;
Thy sorrow is in vain ;
For violets, plucked, the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow again,"

when King surprised us by bursting into tears. But as Mrs. Sanker took no notice, I supposed it was nothing unusual.

"You young donkey!" cried Dan, when the poem was finished. "You'll never be a man, King."

"It is such a nice verse, Dan," replied young King meekly. "I whisper it over sometimes to myself in bed. Mamma, won't you say the 'Barber's Ghost?' Johnny Ludlow would like to hear that, I know."

We had the Barber's Ghost, which was humorous, and we had other things. After that, Mrs. Sanker told a dreadful story about a real ghost, one that she said haunted her family, and another of a murder that was discovered by a dream. Some of the young Sankers were the oddest mixtures of timidity and bravery—personally brave in fighting ; frightfully timid as to being alone in the dark—and I no longer wondered at it if she had brought them up on these ghostly dishes.

"I should not like to have dreams that would tell me of murders," said King thoughtfully. "But I do dream very strange dreams sometimes. When I awake, I lie and wonder what they mean. Once I dreamt I saw Heaven—didn't I, mamma? It was so beautiful."

"Ay; my family have always been dreamers," replied Mrs. Sanker.

Thus, what with ghosts and poetry and talking, the afternoon wore on unconsciously. Dan suddenly started up with a shout.

"By Jove!"

The sun had come out. Come out, and we had never noticed it. It was shining as brightly as could be on the slates of all the houses. The rain had gone.

"I say, we shall have the review yet!" cried Dan. "And, by Jupiter, that's the college bell! Make a rush, you fellows, or you'll be marked late. There's three o'clock striking."

The King's scholars thought it a great shame that they should have to attend prayers in the Cathedral morning and afternoon on saints' days, instead of wholly benefiting by the holiday. They were the rules, however. The three went flying out towards the Cathedral, and I gave King my arm to help him after them. Tod and I—intending to take part in the review at Berwick's Bridge—went to college also, and sat behind the surpliced King's scholars on the decani side, in the stalls next to the chanter.

But for a bit of mud, you'd hardly have thought there had been any rain when we got out again; and the sun was glowing in the blue sky. Not a single fellow was absent: even King limped along. We took the way by the Severn, past the boat-house at the end of the college boundaries, and went leisurely along the towing-path, intending to get into the fields beyond Diglis Wharf, and so onwards.

I don't believe there was a thought in anybody's mind that afternoon of the enemy. The talk—and a good hubbub it was—turned wholly upon soldiers and reviews. A regular review of the Worcestershire militia took place once a year on Kempsey Ham, and some of the boys' heads got a trifle turned with it. They were envying Lord Ward; now, as they went along; saying they should like to be him, and look as well as he did, and sit his horse as proudly.

"Of course he's proud," squeaked out the biggest Teal, whose voice was uncertain. "Think of his money!—and his horses!—and see how good-looking he is! If Lord Ward has not a right to be proud, I'd like to know who has. Why he—oh, by George! I say, look here!"

Turning into the first field, we found we had turned into a company of Frogs. All the whole lot, it seemed. Caws and croaks and hoots and groans from either side rose on the air. Which army commenced the hostilities, I couldn't tell; the one was as eager for it as the other; and in two minutes the battle had begun. Up dashed the senior boy.

"Look here," said he to me and Tod, "you understand our rules. You must neither of you attempt to meddle in this. Stay and look on if you please; but keep at a sufficient distance where it may be seen that you are neuter. These beggars shan't have it to say that we were helped."

He dashed back again. Tod ground his teeth with the effort it took

to keep himself from going in to pummel some of the Frogs. Being upon honour, he had to refrain: and did it somehow.

The Frogs had the blazing sun in their eyes; our side at their backs—which was against *them*. There were no weapons of any sort; only arms and hands. It looked like the scrimmage of an Irish row. Some times there was closing-in, and fighting hand to hand, head to head; sometimes the forces were drawn back again, each to its respective ground. During the first of these interludes, just as the sides were preparing to charge again, a big Frog, with broad, awkward shoulders, a red, rugged face, and a bleeding nose, came dashing forward alone into the ranks of the college boys, caught up poor lame helpless King Sanker, bore him bravely right through, and put him down in safety beyond, in spite of the blows freely showered upon him. Not a soul on our side had thought of King: and the college boys were too excited to see what the big Frog was about, or they'd perhaps have granted him grace to pass unmolested. King sat down on the wet grass for a bit, and gazed about him like a chap bewildered. Seeing me and Tod, he came limping round to us.

"It was good natured of that big Frog, wasn't it, Johnny Ludlow?"

"Very. He'd make a brave soldier. I mean a real soldier."

"Perhaps I should have been killed, but for him. I was frightened, you see; and there was no way out. I couldn't have kept on my legs a minute longer."

The battle raged. The cawing and the croaking, that had been kept up like an array of trumpets, fell off as the fighting waxed hotter. The work grew too fierce and real for tongue abuse. We could hear the blows dealt on the up-turned faces. King, who had a natural horror of fighting, trembled inwardly from head to foot, and hid his face behind me. Tod was dancing with excitement; flinging his closed fists outwards in imaginary battle, and roaring out like a dragon.

I can't say who would have won had they been left alone. Probably the Frogs: for they were a good many more than us. But on the other hand, none of them were so old as some of the college boys. When the fight was at the thickest, we heard a sudden shout from a base, gruff, authoritative voice, "Now then, boys, how dare you?" and saw a big, portly gentleman in black clothes and a white necktie, appear behind the Frogs with a stout stick in his hand.

It was Clerk Jones; their master. His presence and his voice acted like magic. Not a Frog of them all but dropped his blows and his rage. The college boys had to drop theirs, as the enemy receded. Clerk Jones put himself between the two lots of combatants.

The way he went on at both was something good to hear. Shaking his stick at his own boys they turned tail softly, and then rushed away through the mud like wild horses, not waiting to hear the close: so the college boys got the pepper intended for the lot. He vowed and

declared by the stick that was in his hand—and he had the greatest mind, he interrupted himself to say, to put it about *their* backs—that if ever they molested his boys again, or another quarrel was got up, he would appeal publicly to the dean and chapter. If one of the college boys made a move in future to so much as cast an insulting look towards a boy in St. Peter's school, that boy should go before the dean; and it would not be his fault (the clerk's) if he was not expelled the Cathedral. He would take care, and precious good care, that his boys should preserve civility henceforth; and it was no great favour to expect that the college boys would. For his part, he should feel ashamed in their places to oppress lads in an inferior class of life to themselves: and he should make it his business before he slept to see the head master and report this present disgraceful scene to him: the master could deal with it as he pleased.

Mr. Jones went off, flourishing his stick: and our side began to sum up its damages: closed eyes, scratched faces, swollen noses, and torn clothes. Dan Sanker's nose was as big as a beer barrel, and his shirt front hung in ribbons. Fred's eyes were black. Toby's jacket had a sleeve slit up, and one of his boots had disappeared for good.

The spectacle we made, going home down the Gloucester Road, could not be easily forgotten. Folks collected on the pavement, and came to the windows and doors to see the sight. It was like an army of soldiers returning from battle. Bleeding faces, green eyes, clothes tattered and bespattered with mud. Farmers going back from market drew up their gigs to the roadside, to stare at us while we passed. One little girl, wedged into a pony-chaise between a fat old lady in a red shawl and a gentleman in top boots, was frightened nearly into fits. She shrieked and cried, till you might have heard her up at Mr. Allies's; and the old lady could not pacify her. The captain was out: and Mrs. Sanker took it with her usual apathy, only saying we had better have come straight home from college to hear some more poetry.

An awful fuss was made by the head master. Especially as the boys had to appear on Sunday at the Cathedral services. Damages were visible on many of them; and their white surplices only served to show the faces off all the more. The chorister who took the solo in the afternoon anthem was decorated with cuttings of sticking plaster; he looked like a tattooed young Indian. They broke up on the Monday.

On that day Mr. and Mrs. Todhetley drove into Worcester, and put up at the Star and Garter. They came to us in the afternoon, as had been agreed upon; dinner being ordered by Captain Sanker for five o'clock. It was rather a profuse dinner, for we had fish and meat and pies and dessert; but quite a scramble of confusion; which none of the Sankers seemed to notice or to mind.

"Johnny, dear, is it *always* like this?" Mrs. Todhetley could not help asking me. "I should be in a lunatic asylum in a week."

We started for Malvern on Tuesday at eleven o'clock. The Squire drove Bob and Blister in his high carriage : Dr. Teal, Captain Sanker, and Fred sitting with him. There was no railroad then. The ladies and the girls crammed themselves into a post-carriage from the Star, and a big waggonette was lent by some friend of Dr. Teal for the rest. The boys were losing the signs of their damages ; nothing being very conspicuous now but Dan's nose. It refused to go down at all in size, and in colour was brighter than a rainbow. The Teals kept laughing at it, which made Dan savage ; once he burst out in a passion, wishing all the Frogs were shot.

I remember that drive still. John Teal and I sat on the box of the post-carriage, the post-boy riding his horses. I remember the different features of the road as we passed them—not but that I knew them well before ; I remember the laden orchards, and the sweet scent of the bean fields, in flower then. Over the bridge from Worcester went we, up the New Road and through St. John's, and then into the open country ; past Lower Wick, where Mrs. Sherwood lived, and on to Powick across its bridge. I remember that a hearse and three mourning coaches stood before the Lion, the men refreshing themselves with drink ; and we wondered who was being buried that day. Down that steep and awkward hill, where so many accidents occurred before it was altered, and so on to the Link ; the glorious hills always before us from the turning where they had first burst into view ; their clumps of gorse and broom, their paths and their sheep-tracks growing gradually plainer to the sight the nearer we drew. The light and the shade cast by the sun swept over them perpetually, a landscape ever changing ; the white houses of the village, nestling amid their dark foliage, looked fair for the eye to rest upon. Youth, as we all get to learn when it has gone by, lends a charm that later life can never know : but never a scene that I have seen since, abroad or at home, lies on my memory with half the beauty as does that old approach to Malvern. Turning round to the left at the top of the Link, we drove into Great Malvern.

The carriages were left at the Crown. An old pony was chartered for some of the provisions, and we boys carried the rest. The people at St. Ann's Well had been written to, and the room behind the well was in readiness for us. Once the baskets were deposited there, we were at liberty till dinner-time, and went on up the hill. Turning a corner which had hidden the upper landscape from view, we came upon Dan Sanker, who had got on first. He was standing to confront us, his face big with excitement, his nose all afire.

"If you'll believe me, those cursed Frogs are here!"

In resentful consternation—for the Frogs seemed to have no business

to be at Malvern—we rushed on, turned another corner, and so brought ourselves into a wide expanse of prospect. Sure enough! About a hundred of the Frogs in their Sunday clothes were trooping down the hill. They had got the start of us in arriving at Malvern, and had been to the top already.

"I'll—be—jiggered!" cried Dan savagely. "What a horrid lot they are! Look at their sneaking tail-coats. Wouldn't I like to pitch into them!"

The college school wore the Eton jacket. Those preposterous coats, the tails docked to the size of the boys, did not improve the appearance of the Frogs. But as to pitching-in, Dan did not dare to do it after what had passed. It was his nose that made him so resentful.

"I desire that you will behave as gentlemen," said Captain Sanker, who was behind with the Squire, and bid us halt. "Those poor boys are here, I see; but they will not, I am sure, molest you; neither must you molest them. Civility costs nothing, remember. What are you looking so cross for, Dan?"

"Oh well, papa, it's like their impudence, to come here to-day!" muttered Dan!"

The captain laughed. "They may say it's like yours, to come, Dan: they were here first; go on, lads, and don't forget yourselves."

Tod's whistle below was heard just then; and Dan, not caring to show his nose to the enemy, responded, and galloped back. We went on. The paths there are narrow, you know, and we looked to have all the string of Frogs sweeping past us, their coats brushing our jackets. But—perhaps not caring to meet us any more than we cared to meet them—most of them broke off on a détour down the steep of the hill, and so avoided us. About half a dozen came on. One of them was a big-shouldered, awkward, red boy, taller than the rest of them and not unlike a real frog; he walked without his cap, and his brown hair stood on end like a porcupine's. Indisputably ugly was he, with a mouth as wide as a frying-pan; but it was a pleasant and honest face, for all that. King suddenly darted to him as he was passing, and pulled him towards Captain Sanker, all excitement.

"Papa, this is the one I told you of; the one who saved me and didn't mind the blows he got in doing it. I should have been knocked down and my knee trampled on, but for him."

Out went Captain Sanker's hand to shake the boy's. He did it heartily. As to the Frog, he blushed redder than before with modesty.

"You are a brave lad and I thank you heartily," said the captain, wringing his hand as though he'd wring it off. "You do honour to yourself, whoever you may be. There was not one of his own companions to think of him, and save him, and you did it in the midst of dangers. Thank you, my lad."

The captain slid half a crown into his hand, telling him to get some Malvern cakes. The boy stood back for us to go by. I was the last, and he spoke as if he knew me.

"Good day, Master Johnny."

Why, who was he?—And, now I came to look at his freckled face, it seemed quite familiar. His great wide mouth made me remember.

"Why it's Mark Ferrar! I didn't know you at first, Mark."

"We've come over here for the day in two vans," said Mark, putting his grey cap on. "Eighty of the biggest of us; the rest are to come to-morrow. Some gent that's visiting at St. Peter's parsonage has gave us the treat, sir."

"All right, Mark. I'm glad you thought of King Sanker on Saturday."

Ferrar touched his cap, and went vaulting down after his comrades. He was related to Daniel Ferrar, the Squire's bailiff, of whom you have heard before, poor fellow, and also to the Batleys of South Crabb. He used to come over, and that's where I had seen him.

Some donkeys came running down the hill, their white cloths flying. Captain Sanker stopped one and put King on him—for King was tired already. We soon got to the top then and to Lady Harcourt's Tower. Oh it was a glorious day! The great wide prospect around shone out in all its beauty. The vale of Herefordshire on the one side, with its rural plains and woods, basked in the sunshine, its crops of ruddy pears and apples giving token of the cider and perry to come; on the other side rose the more diversified landscape that has been so much told and talked of. Over the green meadows and the ripening corn-fields lay Worcester itself: the Cathedral showing out well, and the summit of the high church spire of St. Andrew's catching a glint of the sunlight. Hills caught the eye wherever it turned: Bredon Hill, Abberleigh Hills, the Old Hills: homesteads lay amid their lands, half hidden by their rick-yards and their clustering trees; cattle and sheep browsed on the grass or lay in the shade to shelter themselves from the mid-day sun. To the right, on the verge of the horizon, far, far away, might be caught a glimpse of something that sparkled like a bed of stars—the Bristol Channel. It is not often you can discern that from Malvern, but this day that I am telling of was one of the clearest ever seen there; the atmosphere looking quite rarefied in spite of the sunlight.

King's donkey regaled himself with morsels of herbage, the donkey boy lay stretched beside him, and we boys raced about. When an hour or two had passed, and we were hotter than fire and more hungry than hunters, we bethought ourselves of dinner. King got on his donkey again, and the rest of us whipped him up. When half way down we saw Dr. Teal gesticulating and shouting, telling us to come on and not keep dinner waiting longer.

We had it in the room behind the well. It was a squeeze to sit

round the table. Cold meats, and salad, and pastry, and all sorts of things. Dan was next to me ; he said he could hardly eat for thirst, and kept drinking away at the bottled ale.

"My dear," said Mrs. Todhetley to him by and by, "don't you think you had better drink some water instead—or lemonade? This bottled ale is very strong."

"I am afraid it is," said Dan. "I'll go in for the tarts now."

The room was stuffy ; and after dinner a table was carried out to a sheltered place near the well : not much better than a little ledge of a path, but where we could not be overlooked, and should be quite out of the way of the hill climbers. The bank rose perpendicularly above us, banks descended beneath to goodness knew where ; there we sat at dessert all sheltered. I think dark trees and shrubs overshadowed us ; but I am not altogether sure.

How it came about, I hardly know : but something was brought up about King's store of ballads, and he was asked to give us his favourite one, "Lord Bateman," for the benefit of the company. He turned very shy, but Captain Sanker told him not to be silly : and after going white and red for a bit, he began. Perhaps the reader would like to hear it. I never repeat it to myself, no, nor even a verse of it, but poor King Sanker comes before me just as I saw him that day, his back to the ravine below, his eyes looking at nothing, his thin hands nervously twisting some paper about that had been over the basket of raspberries.

Lord Bateman was a noble lord,
A noble lord of high degree :
He shipped himself on board a ship ;
Some foreign country he would see.

He sailèd east, he sailèd west,
Until he came un—to Turkey.
Where he was taken, and put in prison,
Until his life was quite weary.

In this prison there grew a tree ;
It grew so very stout and strong :
And he was chain'd by the middle
Until his life was almost gone.

The Turk, he had one only daughter,
The fairest creature eye e'er did see :
She stole the keys of her father's prison,
And said she'd set Lord Bateman free.

"Have you got houses ?—have you got lands ?—
Or does Northumberland belong to thee ?
And what would you give to the fair young lady
Who out of prison would set you free ?"

"Oh I've got houses, and I've got land,
And half Northumberland belongs to me ;
And I'd give it all to the fair young lady
That out of prison would set me free."

Then she took him to her father's palace,
And gave to him the best of wine ;
And every health that she drank to him
Was "I wish, Lord Bateman, you were mine.

A Day of Pleasure.

" For seven long years I'll make a vow ;
 And seven long years I'll keep it strong :
 If you will wed no other woman,
 I will wed no other man."

Then she took him to her father's harbour,
 And gave to him a ship of fame :
 " Farewell, farewell to you, Lord Bateman ;
 I fear I never shall see you again."

* * * * *
 When seven long years were gone and past,
 And fourteen days, well known to me ;
 She packed up her gay gold and clothing,
 And said Lord Bateman she would see.

When she came to Lord Bateman's castle,
 So boldly there she rang the bell :
 " Who's there, who's there," cried the young proud porter ;
 " Who's there, who's there unto me tell."

" Oh is this Lord Bateman's castle ?
 And is his lordship here within ?"
 " Oh yes, oh yes," cried the young proud porter :
 " He has just now taken his young bride in."

" Tell him to send me a slice of cake,
 And a bottle of the best of wine ;
 And not to forget the fair young lady
 That did release him when close confined."

Away, away went this young proud porter,
 Away, away, away went he ;
 Until he came unto Lord Bateman,
 When on his bended knees fell he.

" What news, what news, my young porter ;
 What news, what news have you brought unto me ?"
 " Oh there is the fairest of all young ladies,
 That ever my two eyes did see.

" She has got rings on every finger,
 And on one of them she has got three ;
 And she has as much gold round her middle
 As would buy Northumberland of thee.

" She tells you to send her a slice of cake,
 And a bottle of the best of wine ;
 And not to forget the fair young lady
 That did release you when close confined."

Lord Bateman in a passion flew ;
 He broke his sword in splinters three ;
 " I'll give all my father's wealth and riches
 Now if Sophia has crossed the sea."

Then up spoke his young bride's mother—
 Who never was heard to speak so free :
 " Don't you forget my only daughter,
 Although Sophia has crossed the sea."

" I own I've made a bride of your daughter :
 She's none the better nor worse for me :
 She came to me on a horse and saddle,
 And she may go back in a carriage and three."

Then another marriage was prepared,
 With both their hearts so full of glee :
 " I'll range no more to foreign countries
 Since my Sophia has crossed the sea."

King stopped : just as shyly as he had begun. Some laughed,

others applauded him ; and the Squire told us that the first time he had ever heard "Lord Bateman" was in Scouton's show, on Worcester race-course.

After that we broke up. I and some of the boys climbed up straight to Lady Harcourt's Tower again. A few Frogs were about the hills, but they did not come in contact with us. When we got back to St. Ann's the tea was ready in the room.

"And I wish to goodness they'd have it," cried Dan, "for I'm as thirsty as a fish. I've been asleep out there all the while on the bench in the sun. Can't we have tea, mother?"

"As soon as ever the gentlemen come back," spoke up Mrs. Teal, who seemed to like order. "They went down to have a look at the Abbey."

They were coming up then, puffing over the walk ; Tod and Fred Sanker with them. The tea was half over when somebody missed the two young Sankers, King and Toby.

"Tiresome monkeys!" cried the captain. "I never came over here with a party yet, but we had to spend the last hour or two hunting some of them up. Well, I'll not bother myself over it : they shall find their way home as they can."

Toby ran in presently. He had only been about the hills, he said, and had not seen King.

"I daresay King's still in the place where we had dessert," said Hetta Sanker, just then thinking of it. "He stayed behind us all saying he was tired. One of you boys go and see."

I and Jim Teal ran off together. King was not there. One of the women at the well said when she went out for the chairs and things, just before tea time, nobody was there.

"Oh, he'll turn up presently," said the captain. And we went on with our tea, and forgot him.

It was twilight when we got down to the village. The Squire started first ; the same party with him as in the morning, except that Mrs. Teal took her husband's place. When they were bringing out the post-carriage, King was again thought of.

"He has stayed singing to himself somewhere," said Mrs. Sanker.

We went off in different directions, shouting our throats hoarse. Up as far as St. Ann's, and along the hill underneath, and in all the corners of the village : no King. It was getting strange.

"I should hope none of those impudent Frogs have made off with him !" cried Toby Sanker.

"They are capable of any thing, mind you," added Dan.

One vanload of Frogs had started ; the other was getting ready. The boys, gaping and listening about, saw and heard all our consternation at the dilemma we were in. Mrs. Todhetley, who did not under-

stand the state of social politics, as between them and the college school, turned and inquired whether they had seen King.

"A delicate lad, who walks lame," she explained. "We think he must have fallen asleep somewhere on the hill: and we cannot start without him."

The Frogs showed themselves good-natured; and went tearing up towards the hill. In passing the Unicorn, a pleasure party of young men and women, carrying their empty provision baskets, came running downwards, saying that they had heard groaning under a part of the hill—and described where. I seemed to catch the right place, as if by instinct, and was up there first. King was lying there. Not groaning, then; but senseless, or dead.

Looking upwards to note the position, we thought he must have fallen down from the place where we had sat at dessert. Hetta Sanker said she had left him there by himself, to rest.

"He must have dropped asleep and fallen down," cried Dr. Teal.

King came to as they lifted him, and walked a few steps; but looked around, and fell aside as though his head were dazed. Dr. Teal thought there was not much the matter, and that he might be conveyed to Worcester. Ferrar helped to carry him down the hill, and the Frogs followed. A fine fury their van driver was in!

King was made comfortable along the floor of the waggonette, upon some rugs and blankets lent by the Crown; and so was taken home. When Captain Sanker found what had happened, he grew excited, and went knocking at half the doctors' doors in Worcester. Mr. Woodward was the first in, and Dr. Malden and Mr. Carden came running together. By what the captain had said, they expected to find all the house dead.

King seemed better in the morning. The injury lay chiefly in his head. We did not hear what the doctors made of it. He was sensible and talked a little. When asked how he came to fall, all he said was that he "went over and could not save himself."

Coming in from carrying the news of how he was up to the Squire and Mrs. Todhetley at the Star, I found Mark Ferrar at the door.

"Mr. Johnny," said he, in a low voice, his plain face all concern, "how did it happen? Sure he was not pushed over?"

"Of course not. Why do you ask it?"

Ferrar paused. "Master Johnny, when boys are lame, they are more cautious. He'd hardly be likely to slip."

"He might in waking. It's only a narrow ledge there. And his sister says she thinks he went to sleep when she left him. She was the last that saw him."

Mark's wide mouth went into all sorts of contortions, and the freckles shone in the sun in his effort to get the next words out.

"I fancy it was me that saw him last, Master Johnny. Leastways, later than his sister."

"Did you! How was that?"

"He must have seen me near the place, and called to me. There was nobody there but him, and some chairs and a table and glasses and things. He asked me to sit down, and began telling me he had been saying 'Lord Bateman' to them all. I didn't know what Lord Bateman meant, Master Johnny—and he said he would tell it me; he should not mind then, but he had minded saying it to the company. It was poetry, I found; but he stopped in the middle, and told me to go then for he saw some of them coming—"

"Some of who?" I interrupted.

"Well, I took it to mean some of his grown-up party, or else the college boys. Anyway, he seemed to want me gone, sir, and I went off at once. I didn't see him after that."

"He must have fallen asleep, and somehow slipped over."

"Yes, sir. What a pity he was left in that shallow place!"

King seemed to have all his wits about him, but his face had a white, odd look in it. He lay in a room on the first floor that belonged in general to the two girls. When I said Mark Ferrar was outside, King asked for him to go up: but I did not like taking him without speaking to Captain Sanker; and I went to him in the parlour.

"The idea of a Frog coming into our house!" cried resentful Dan. "It's like his impudence to stop outside it! What next? Let him wait till King's well."

"You hold your tongue, Dan," cried Captain Sanker. "The boy shall go up, whether he's a Frog or whether he's one of you. Take him up, Johnny."

He did not look unlike a frog when he got into the room, with his wide, red, freckled face and his great wide mouth—but, as I have said, it was a face to be trusted. The first thing he did, looking at King, was to burst into a great blubber of tears.

"I hope you'll get well," said he.

"I might have been as bad as this in the fight, but for your pulling me out of it, Frog," said King in his faint voice. And he did not call him Frog in any contempt, but as though it were his name: he knew him by no other. "Was that bump done in the battle?"

Mark had his cap off: on one side of his forehead, under the hair, we saw a big lump the size of an egg. "Yes," he answered, "it was got in the fight. Father thinks it never means to go down. It's pretty stiff and sore yet."

King sighed. He was gazing up at the lump with his nice blue eyes.

"I don't think there'll be any fighting in Heaven," said King. "And I wrote out 'Lord Bateman' the other day, and they shall give it you to keep. I didn't finish telling it you. He owned half Northumber-

land ; and he married her, after all. She had set him free from the prison, you know, Frog."

" Yes," replied Frog, quite bewildered, and looking as though he could not make top or tail of the story. " I hope you'll get well. How came you to fall ? "

" I don't think they expect me to get well : they'd not have so many doctors if they did. I shan't be lame, Frog, up there."

" Did you slip ? or did anybody push you ? " went on Frog, lowering his voice.

" Hush ! " said King, glancing at the door. " If papa heard you say that, he might go into a passion."

" But—was it a slip—or were you pushed over ? " persisted Frog.

" My leg is always slipping : it has never been of much good to me," answered King. " When you come up there, and see me with a beautiful strong body and straight limbs, you won't know me again at first. Good-bye till then, Frog ; good-bye. It was very kind of you to carry me out of the fight, and God saw you."

" Good-bye," said Frog, with another burst, as he put out his hand to meet poor King's white one. " Perhaps you'll get over it yet."

Tod and I took leave of them in the afternoon, and went up to the Star. The Squire wanted to be home early. The carriage was waiting before the gateway, the ostler holding the heads of Bob and Blister, when Captain Sanker came up in dreadful excitement.

" He's gone," he exclaimed. " My poor King's gone. He died as the clock was striking four."

And we had supposed King to be going on well ! The Squire ordered the horses to be put up again, and we went down to the house. The boys and girls were all crying.

King lay stretched on the bed, his face very peaceful and looking less white than I had sometimes seen it in life. On the cheeks there lingered a faint colour ; his forehead felt warm ; you could hardly believe he was dead.

" He has gone to the Heaven he talked of," said Mrs. Sanker through her tears. " He has been talking about it at intervals all day—and now he is there ; and has his harp amid the angels."

And that was the result of our Day of Pleasure ! The force of those solemn words has rarely been brought home to hearts as it was to ours then : " In the midst of life we are in death."

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

STATIRA.

NO romance had ever come to me. None. I began to think it near time it did. Not that I was old, but young : twenty only. But my sisters were both married, and I was left at home alone. It was not the marrying I cared for but the romance. Papa would pat my head and call me his own little girl still.

It came, the romance, on the most prosy of our home days. A strange gentleman met with an accident, almost at our door, and was brought in for help and shelter. It proved to be Ralph Beaton, one of the Beatons of the next county, Essex : but they were strangers to us until then.

The days went on, and he said it was I who had nursed him back to life. I ! No eyes ever looked into mine as his did: grateful, thrilling brown eyes, they were, that made mine fall. He began to address me as "little sunshine" whenever I went into the room, and when he grew better and I read and sang to him, he took to calling me "little comfort," and "heart's delight." It was only a short time after that that he asked me to be his wife.

My father and mother expressed surprise at the offer one to the other. It was so "hasty," they said ; they thought he had made up his mind too quickly. But they were pleased and proud of it: they had learnt to like Mr. Beaton, and he was very well off, though his branch was not the head of the Beaton family. It was a far better offer than they had ever expected for me: quite different from the marriages Bella and Nancy had made. The one's husband was a merchant in the city; the other's was an artist; and though he painted charmingly, he had not made much head yet in the world of fame.

Intrusive friends called Mr. Beaton a "prize." Well, he was mine. Without flirting or angling or any other small detestable arts, I had won him fairly. I could hardly believe in my own happiness sometimes when I looked up into his handsome face and met his smile. You know what it is to feel that a thing is too good to be true, and how it is almost a relief if a bit of trouble comes with it, because then it seems as if it might really be possible, really might endure. And so my bliss seemed almost like a dream and unstable, until one day Ralph put a little alloy into it by telling me he had loved some one else before he saw me. I think he felt that it was more honourable to tell me this.

"And why did you not marry her?" I asked, with a pang.

"Oh, she would none of me!" he replied lightly. "I hadn't the shadow of a chance. You see I was mistaken when I thought she cared for me. It was not to be, so I came away; and fate led me straight to you, little Janie. *You won't ever give me up, will you?*"

"No, I never will give you up, Ralph!" I said, and registered it in my heart like a vow. How dared she slight him? He should find one heart at least as true as steel. Somehow I felt more at ease, more sure of Ralph Beaton after this confidence, which, nevertheless, you perceive, had its bitter side.

During his illness I had written several times for him to his mother; she was ill herself then, and unable to journey to him. When he was able to write himself he told her of our engagement. Upon that she had sent me a beautiful letter; and now she was urging his return. An uncle of his had died suddenly, during Ralph's absence, and there had been other changes. Mr. Beaton was the family's head, but his money all went to his daughter, not to his nephew, Ralph. But he was an only child, and sufficiently well off before; his mother a widow. "Come at once, and bring Jane with you," urged Mrs. Beaton. "You cannot tell how I desire to know her."

It was not possible then for my mother to go with me; but Ralph asked whether she thought she could entrust her child to any who would take care of her as he would. So they sent me with him and our old servant maid Susan—and Mrs. Beaton's carriage met us at the train.

It was a beautiful afternoon in late August when we reached Beaton Place. Ralph's mother, a tall, gentle, pale, stately lady, came down the steps to the carriage door. She folded me in her arms and kissed me, then put me a little from her, with a questioning, eager look, ending it with a little sigh and another kiss. I hardly know why, but I began to wish that I was tall and slender and stately too; perhaps it was because it seemed fitting that so the mistress of Beaton Place should be. This feeling grew upon me afterwards when Ralph showed me the old family portraits of the grand, beautiful ladies who had been numbered among his ancestry.

Ralph and his mother had a hundred things to talk about; and as we sat around the supper-table, they were speaking of his uncle's sudden death.

"And Statira is alone in the old mansion," said Mrs. Beaton.

"Statira here!" exclaimed Ralph. "I should have expected her to But this," he broke off, "postpones her marriage, probably to some— indefinite period."

"There seems to be no prospect of any marriage," replied the mother. "Mr. Innes was a great favourite with your uncle, but he has not visited Statira since her father's death."

"The base scoundrel, if he has deserted her!" muttered Ralph, fiercely.

"Oh, we cannot tell on which side the responsibility lies, you know," said Mrs. Beaton, lightly. "I imagine she has refused him now that she is her own mistress. You must go over to Statira's to-morrow, my

dear, with Ralph," she added, turning to me. "I want you to see the old place ; and you will be sure to like my niece."

I thought to myself what a strange, old-fashioned name Statira was, and wondered whether it was taken from the Bible. It seemed as if its owner should rank with Queen Vashti and the Queen of Sheba. Many times during the evening I found myself wondering about this Statira, who would so soon be my cousin ; and as my eyes roamed around the great Beaton drawing-room with its lofty ceilings, its magnificent frescoes, and with its air of grand loneliness, I thought what a comfort it would be if Statira should prove a loving companion and friend.

The next morning Ralph took me to see her. Mrs. Beaton had not gone out since her illness. Beaton Hall, the grand place of the Beaton family and residence of its head (this Statira was its head now), was close by. We crossed the lawn and the home grounds, and thence through a little copse of silver elms, into a pretty grassy lane, where a few steps brought us to a small gate half hidden by sweet-briar.

"I don't believe this gate has been opened all the summer long," said Ralph, pushing aside the tangle of blossom and briar ; "but this is the way I always used to come, and this will take us direct into the garden. Statira is very fond of gardening, and if we should find her here, you will get acquainted ten times sooner than if you began ceremoniously in-doors.

We were already beginning to pass clumps of beautiful shrubs and trees, and soon burst into a perfect field of flower-beds. Standing with pruning scissors in her hand was a young lady, clipping leaves and twigs from a rose-tree. Her back was towards us ; but there was no need for me to see her face to feel she was a true Beaton, tall, graceful, and queenly.

"Statira ! Statira !" called Ralph, as we neared her. She did not start, but turned, as if accustomed to his voice, and came to meet us with the sweetest smile of welcome I ever saw. That was my first revelation of her—coming down the garden-path to meet us, habited in deepest black ; a lady of high-bred beauty, stately and gracious, with what should have been radiant brightness, but was toned down to gentle sweetness by the grief and care she had been passing through.

Ralph took both her hands in his in cousinly greeting, and they stood so for a moment. Then he drew her towards me.

"And here is a little girl, Statira, who cares enough for me to have promised to marry me by and by."

"I have heard of this little girl," she said, "and she must have her welcome !" And then she kissed me softly on my forehead, and my heart went out to her.

I turned aside a few steps, lingering by a great bush of verbena, and pressing its fragrant leaves between my palms, for I thought

they might have family affairs to talk of. But they followed me almost immediately, and Statira with her own hands gathered me a great bouquet of roses, while Ralph looked on well pleased.

"I believe I have clipped all the thorns off," she said, as she handed them to me in her sweet and gracious way.

"And have torn your own hands!" I cried, regretfully.

"Oh, I always wear armour!" she replied, showing her gloves.

"When will you wear bridal roses, cousin mine?" asked Ralph, rather abruptly.

"Never," said Statira, looking as fair and proud as the huntress Diana herself.

"But—Mr. Innes?" began Ralph in an eager sort of way. "I thought—I fancied—" he broke off abruptly.

"You have always had a great many fancies, cousin Ralph," said Statira, smiling upon him. "And the latest, the sweetest, and the truest is your fancy for this Jane of ours."

And then, as if to end the subject, she led us on through the garden, among her tall white lilies and scarlet rhododendrons, pointing out from moment to moment her favourite flowers. How I did wish my mother could have seen this grand, old-fashioned garden. It would have rejoiced her dear tired soul so, for it was like gardens she had described to me in stories of her childhood.

Our morning call was but a brief one; but it struck deep into my memory. I never can forget Statira as I saw her that first day, moving queen-like beneath the shadow of the trees her ancestors, of generations gone, had planted.

Who was Mr. Innes, I asked of Ralph, as we strolled homeward through the lane; and his brow clouded as he answered me. A wealthy man of high position who had been deeply in love with Statira, and whom it was her father's great wish she should marry.

"But whom she did not love?—was that it, Ralph?"

"I suppose so. She said just a word to me now—that he did not 'suit' her."

"Some one like yourself would suit her, Ralph," said I, in my foolish fancy.

"No no," was the hasty answer. "I suit only you, Janie."

And no man on earth should have a truer lover, I thought; nothing but death should part him and me.

Statira became my friend and fortress. There was a sort of grand generosity about her that seemed to enfold and help me whenever I needed it. In all kinds of little vexatious trifles, she was my refuge. When I did not know how to dress for a dinner-party; when I was uncertain what kind of ceremony to observe in the drawing-room when the great ceremonious people of the county crowded it; and worst, though most indefinable of all, when I feared a lurking disappointment

in Ralph's mother's eyes as she looked at me, as if somehow I was falling short of her standard, and should always fall short of it. Statira was there a great deal, ever ready to counsel and shield me—for I was shy and timid amid this class of society that I had not been used to.

But one day, going by the half-closed library door, I heard Statira's voice within talking to Mrs. Beaton. The words reached me.

"She is a good, true little girl, Aunt Bessy, and one can see how thoroughly she loves him. Oh, she will make him an excellent wife!"

"Yes, but not quite what we thought he would have chosen, my dear," answered Mrs. Beaton, in a slow, soft tone of regret.

I sped on through the hall, and heard no more; at the door I ran into Ralph's arms, who was just entering.

"Oh, Ralph!" I cried, impulsively, "I am not good enough for you! I am not good enough!"

"Too good, my darling; you are too good by far!" he said, never asking why I had so spoken. "And now see what I have brought you, Jane."

He opened a small purple case. It held my engagement ring, a hoop of diamonds, as dazzlingly bright as though they had caught all the sunbeams of a century and been crystallized. He put it on, and away went all my misgiving; *he* thought me good enough; there was comfort in that.

By this time I had learned to go at will through copse, and lane, and garden to find Statira: and she met me always with that welcoming smile. I leaned upon her stronger nature, and found a fascination in making her my confidante, retracing for her all the narrow paths of my past life, and telling her all my foolish little dreams and fancies. And one afternoon, walking with her in her grounds, in the very fulness of unreserve, I told her how Ralph had loved some one before he met me—some one who had not cared for him at all.

"Do you suppose it could be Miss Dane?" I asked, referring to a young, coquettish lady who often came there, and who always scanned me with her impudent blue eyes.

Statira did not seem to hear. She was looking straight ahead at the pale purple clouds in the west, with a strange, rapturous expression in her eyes. She was always fond of beauteous sunsets.

"Statira, do you think it could have been Kate Dane? She does all she can to get Ralph away from me, even now."

Statira started slightly at the repeated question. "Kate Dane! Oh no; I feel sure Ralph never cared for any one so frivolous as Kate Dane. I would not wonder more about it, Janie. Who ever it was, since Ralph has forgotten her, you can well afford to do so too."

It was true. Statira always comforted me.

Thus Statira was my confidante, but I was not hers, nor did I dream of seeking to be. I really believe she would have seemed less of a

refuge had she told me all her thoughts, great and small, as I told her mine. In default of actual knowledge, I pleased myself with weaving in fancy one romance after another about her, in each of which she was to marry some great hero some day, and live happily for ever after at Beaton Hall, as beautiful and stately a dame as any Beaton that ever went before her.

The time came for me to go home. We were to be married very shortly, and my mother wanted me for the preparations. The day before my departure Mrs. Beaton took me upstairs to show me certain of the Beaton heirlooms which would be mine when I became mistress. Some curiously engraved old plate with the crest on it; some weblike lace; and some rare, beautiful china. There were a few family jewels—few but valuable—a handsome diamond brooch and ear-rings, a set of sapphires, and a single great pearl, which had no setting at all, but lay in its bed of violet velvet, softly luminous, like a fairy moon.

"Ah, if I only looked like Statira!" I said, with impulsive regret. "Then how well those sapphires would become me!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Beaton, "I lent them to Statira on one occasion, and she certainly looked like an empress."

Not long did I linger even to admire the jewels, for Ralph had called after me when we went upstairs, saying he was going to Statira's, and I might follow as soon as I had got through "Vanity Fair!" But hasten though it seemed to me that I did, he had been gone an hour when I ran through the silver elms. He was standing at the little gate with Statira, evidently saying good-bye.

"Here I come!" I cried, gaily. "Why, what makes you both look so pale? Have you seen a ghost?"

"Nothing more alarming than yourself, dear," said Statira, smiling.

I glanced at Ralph, and noticed something green stuck in his button-hole.

"How doleful!" I exclaimed. "A sprig of rue! Could you not give him anything brighter than that, Statira? I can do better for him myself." And, pulling the rue from its place, I replaced it with a cluster of white and pink buds, sweet and fragrant, that I had snatched from their tree in passing.

"That is right," said Statira, gently. "Be sure always to turn his clouds into sunbeams, Janie."

We came away in silence. Ralph seemed out of sorts, and I—I was wondering why Statira and he looked so pale, so strange, when I found them. Why should I care, I asked myself. And yet it haunted me. It seemed as if an uneasy, dreadful fear was going to creep into my heart, a fear that somehow, somewhere in this life, or in some vague, mysterious one gone, Ralph had loved Statira. I strove resolutely to shut it out; I said to myself it must be nonsense; I would not glance at it willingly a second time; people did not fall in love with their

cousins : and before we entered our own door Ralph had called me again his own sweet-briar Janie.

So I returned home, to see about the wedding things ; and Ralph's letters were fond and frequent.

Have I lingered over my story up to this point ? It is because, thus far, I had nothing to record that could make me feel regret or remorse. But the hour came in which I sowed the seeds of both.

I had not heard from Ralph for a week, and was thinking it strange, when he appeared at our house without warning. The shades of evening were falling, and I happened to be alone. The change in him struck me—worn, pale, not a bit like his cheerful self. He greeted me more like a brother than a lover ; and there was a great gentleness in his eyes.

"Are you Ralph ?—my Ralph ?" I exclaimed impulsively, in my surprise.

"I don't know, Janie."

With this strange reply, he sat down before me, while to my very soul there crept a chill as of some dreadful presentiment. I did not dare to ask further ; and we sat looking at each other in the dim twilight of the evening. Then he spoke.

He spoke. Ralph, my own lover, my husband to be, told me again the old story, which I had almost buried out of mind, about the lady he had loved before me, and how he had gone from her because of her indifference.

"But she was not indifferent, Janie," he said ; "it was all a mistake. She loved me all the time !"

I comprehended in a moment all that was required of me, all that he hesitated to ask ; and I shivered as I met what seemed like a little flash of hope in his eyes.

"Has she sent you to demand your freedom ?" I asked coldly.

"Good Heavens, no, Janie ! She does not dream of my telling you this !"

I glanced around the faded room with its poor furnishings. A sewing machine stood in the corner with some dainty work upon it, meant for me to wear as a bride. I thought of the disappointment of my father and mother, and the comfort they took in my prospects. And then I thought of the other home, of luxury, of love with Ralph : must I give up my chance of *these*, because of the caprice of some girl who would thrust me forth from the place I had won, to enshrine herself within it ? I loved Ralph, and he loved me ; or else everything under Heaven was a lie. But I sat there, never answering, wondering what I could say to retain him. Ralph did not help me by so much as one fond look.

Then, with the vividness of lightning, there flashed into my mind that day when Ralph made me promise I would never give him up—

and I acted upon it. Swayed by passion, by jealousy, and love, I caught at that one straw, that promise of fidelity, by which to float back into my harbour of peace. It was right, oh, it *was* right to try to keep my happiness, and, with sudden tears, I laid my head on Ralph's shoulder, sobbing violently.

"Oh, Ralph, I cannot give you up ; I cannot give you up. You made me promise never to give you up."

He folded me in his arms, speaking gently.

"Did I ? And do you love me so much, little Janie ? Then I never will ask you to give me up. Have I grieved you so much ? You have always been true to me, little one, and I will be true to you."

And so I conquered, and no one ever knew by how narrow a thread I had escaped desertion and heart-break. Ralph got away again to the train unseen by the household ; and his strange visit was not known.

We were married in December : and I bade good-bye to my father, my mother, to the plain, faded rooms, and the colourless life. The cold white snow shrouded the earth when I got to Beaton Place the second time ; but there were warm, glowing fires within, and a sweet welcome awaiting us from Ralph's mother, now beginning to grow feeble. It had been arranged that she should stay in the house and occupy the apartments in the wing. I missed Statira's greeting. She was away, spending the winter at a distance.

It was a pleasant winter to me. Ralph was constantly kind and attentive; and I believed that I made him perfectly happy. Mrs. Beaton would have most graciously resigned the housekeeping into my hands ; it had been so understood ; but I did not care for housekeeping, and Ralph said I should be free from it if I liked. There was a good deal of gaiety around, and I enjoyed the novelty of taking the lead in that. As Mr. Beaton's bride, I was first and foremost with them all. I, little Jane, to have arrived at this ! The Beaton portraits put me to shame no longer, for I wore my silks and velvets and the family jewels, and held my head as high as if I had been born to be tall and queenly.

In the spring Nancy and her artist husband paid us a visit. I had looked eagerly for their coming, and had chosen the prettiest rooms in the house for them. Ralph had gone away for a few days on business when they came. It was rather curious that he and Mr. Jarvis had never met ; but Nancy had been ill at the time of our wedding, and unable to travel. Mr. Jarvis was delighted with Beaton Place ; there were so many picturesque nooks in the grounds, so many charming views from the windows, that he was perpetually longing for his easel, canvas, and brushes.

"I never let him carry them but once," said Nancy, laughing, "and then he packed his colours in my trunk, and some of them leaked out

and spoiled my dresses ! I have restricted him to pencil-sketching ever since, when I travel with him."

The family portraits were a great fascination to Mr. Jarvis. Stately, high-bred beauties, and painted by the best artists of their respective times. One, the portrait of Ralph's great-grandmother, painted when she was twenty-five, he especially admired.

"There are no such faces nowadays !" he said regretfully.

"Ah, wait till you see Statira," I exclaimed, "before you say that ! She is just as grand and beautiful as any Beaton of them all. Maybe she will let you paint her portrait."

The third day of their visit, Nancy and I sat by the open wood-fire, with our embroidery : Mr. Jarvis was stretched in artistic ease on a divan in the bay window. Suddenly he started up.

"Girls, here are people coming to call. A young married couple, should judge. I never saw a handsomer pair in my life !

We dropped our work and ran to the window.

"Why, that's Ralph," I cried. "Ralph and Statira !"

They were driving up the avenue in Statira's pony carriage, which it seemed had been sent to the train to meet her. Ralph arrived quite accidentally at the same time by an opposite train, so they drove home together. Miss Beaton did not come in then, but went on to her own home.

Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis were taken over to Beaton Hall by me the next day. Ralph did not go : his head ached. When we came away they went into raptures over the old-fashioned grounds and the quaint grandeur of the house ; and more than all, Statira herself. She was frequently with us after that : Mr. Jarvis and Nancy admired her beyond everything.

I suppose I had never known the real Statira before, for in the summer when we first met she had been a mourner and depressed. I saw now a magnificent woman ; a queen of society, brilliant and haughty, but with a charm of manner running through all the haughtiness like a golden thread, which made her inexpressibly fascinating. Toward me she was sometimes gentle as of old, but again there was something, almost a sternness, which made me feel afraid and uneasy, and I never could quite get back into the last year's confidential ways.

Somehow, I began to grow lonely in the midst of my company ; a great deal more lonely than in the winter when there were only old Mrs. Beaton, Ralph, and I in the house. Ralph and Statira were both passionately fond of art, and at once were on appreciative terms with Mr. Jarvis. They would hold long, wise, enthusiastic conversations about pre-Raphaelism and all the different schools of painting ; and Ralph brought out his portfolios of rare old engravings, and bits of foreign sketches, which he had never shown to me before, he said, as I did not care much about pictures. It surprised me to see how well

Nancy fitted into this group of art-lovers. She was a winsome, pretty little thing, and nestled on the sofa by her husband's side, admiring whatever he admired, and looking up at him with great devoted brown eyes, and seemed as necessary in the discussions as any of them. But I did not take real interest in them ; I suppose I had no true eye or taste for art ; and the lonely feeling crept deeper into my heart, and settled there. One evening, indeed, I thought I would be like Nancy, and nestled by Ralph's side as they talked. But he was excited over an etching, and did not notice me ; and it ended in my being only a stiff, dumpy little figure, sitting awkwardly on an ottoman.

What did I care for their arabesques and their etchings, their frescoes, their wonders of design, and effects of colour ? I wanted something that was slipping, or had slipped, out of my life.

Another evening they were all in the library, having a sort of artist frolic, making little sketches of each other and caricatures : and the feeling of isolation grew so strong upon me—the feeling that I was hardly wanted amid them—that I crept away from them into the cold, dark drawing-room, and stood there at a window looking out at the night.

I do not know how long I had been there—I daresay they had not missed me—when they all came trooping in ; Ralph and Jarvis holding aloft tall silver candlesticks, and the white wax lights illumined everything softly like the moonlight.

"Now, Mr. Beaton, show me the angel that looks like me !" cried Nancy, merrily.

"Here it is," said Ralph, pointing up at a little corner fresco ; a white angel on an azure ground. "You see the resemblance, Jarvis?"

"Yes. But here's something that takes my fancy more, in the centre group," said Mr. Jarvis. "These two figures floating away together through the gloom."

"People used to say they looked like us, Statira ; [don't you remember?]" and Ralph turned towards his stately cousin. But she answered never a word.

"They remind me of Dante's lost lovers," remarked Jarvis, simply ; and then there was a pause. It was broken by their catching sight of me. At least Mr. Jarvis did.

"Why, here is Jane," he exclaimed, "standing like a fairy against the white curtain !"

Nancy put her arm through mine, and we all went back to the library. She thought me a little moody, and supposed it was because I did not feel well. I was not well. Sometimes a thought crossed me that I might be going to die. That evening Statira bade me good night in her very gentlest tones, now so rare.

"Don't be sad, Janie. You ought to be the happiest little woman on earth !"

Every one seemed to grow kinder after that evening, and yet I had not complained. What was there to complain of? I would not have dared to, though I knew the very heart was gone out of my life. I did not even dare to question myself, for I knew too well what shadow of uneasy fear it was that was haunting me, and that had been ever since it first knocked in vain at the closed door of my heart, the day when I found Ralph and Statira at the sweet-briar gate looking at each other, pale and strange. Still more had I struggled to shun it and shut it out, since the terrible evening when I said to Ralph, "I cannot give you up, I cannot give you up!" Was it then I made my fatal mistake? I say I did not dare ask myself.

Summer came on; and Statira was out in her garden again, and had settled down into a quiet "lady of the manor" life. I did not go there so much as formerly. I stayed at home, and Ralph stayed with me, surrounding me with care and kindness. The Beatons are loyal to the heart's core.

A new clergyman was called to the parish church that summer; an excellent young man, full of fervour, hard-working among the sick and poor, and with a pleasant genial manner which made him a favourite. He called at Beaton Place sometimes, and sometimes met Statira there. I suppose he went to the Hall too. Seeing them together, and noticing how much interest Statira took in his benevolent schemes, aiding him with her money and her enthusiasm, the thought came to me like a ray of light, "What if she should marry Mr. Montin!" It really seemed as if she might be so happy and useful; and what a dignified and charming bishop's wife she would be if ever Mr. Montin rose to be a bishop! I thought of it till I began to believe that it would be so, and it was such a comfort; especially now, when Ralph was growing more kind and thoughtful towards me every day. Perhaps—perhaps, after all—who knew?—a wrong once done might not be a wrong always and for ever. Oh, I knew what a wrong I had done them—her and my husband—in my cruel selfishness! It seemed ever to be with me; like a perpetual sense of sin for which there lies no expiation. If Statira only married happily Heaven might grant me ease in time.

Late in the autumn my baby was born; a boy, and so like his father. There was a calm, sweet season of happiness following; but that I have put away from my heart, and will not dwell on or remember. At any rate Ralph saw his son and heir—and that lasts as a comfort. If Statira never married the boy was heir to all.

Six months later Ralph was brought home to me dying. He had gone out to try a new horse: it threw him violently by the roadside, against a sharp, jutting piece of stone. The doctors said he was dying; his mother and I stood by his side, and heard them. The truth was all too palpable for them to attempt to conceal it.

"Good-bye, dear mother," he faintly said. "Good-bye, dear little Janie. God bless you and my boy!"

And then he closed his eyes, his head sinking back, and we thought him gone; when suddenly Statira entered. Did she walk? did she fly? She came with a strong, rapid motion, as if all the powers of earth could not stop her, and she bent over him, with a dreadful, piteous cry.

"Ralph! Ralph!"

His eyes opened at her voice; he looked at her with a smile of ineffable tenderness. It was the supreme moment of death and of truth.

"Oh, my love, my love, my love!" he breathed, and that was all. She put her arms around him, pressing her face and her lips to his, and there in her arms he died.

How strong we mortals are to endure and still to live! I have tasted of love, of sin, of death, and of despair: and I thought that day, in my grief and my bitter repentance, that I should never look up again. It was I who had blighted their lives: it was I who ought to expiate it. But we are strong, I say. Two years have gone by since then; and though my widowhood has been lonely and sad, I am not now unhappy.

In losing Ralph Beaton I lost a tender, noble friend, but no lover. It seems a mockery when they call me his widow, for a voice within me cries ever, and will not be silenced, that it is not I, not I, who am his widow, bereaved and desolate, but she who dwells alone in her stately mansion, she who will never marry, who will never put off mourning, who thinks only of the day when she will die and meet him. It is she who is in very truth Ralph Beaton's widow.

I did them a terrible wrong, but I have tried to repair it. I am glad little Ralph is so exactly the image of his father, a regular Beaton, with no lineament of mine. My beautiful, noble boy! But I have called him mine for the last time, for this day I have given the child to Statira to be hers for ever. She received him with glad and grateful tears. It is she who should have been the mother of Ralph Beaton's child.

Henceforth I take up my own life and go my own ways. It is arranged that I am to marry Mr. Montin, and thus I shall put from me even the mere semblance of the name, the last thing in which I still usurp another's place. The world is not over for me yet. I see before me a peaceful path where the sun still shines, and a vision of a happy, useful future: and in the dark night-watches when I dwell on my past selfishness, I think how much more merciful God has been to me than I deserved.

A DAY AMONG BRAZILIAN WATERFALLS.

MORNING in Brazil—a fresh, bright, glorious morning in the early winter, which here falls about the middle of May. Rio de Janeiro (which I can just descry from the crest of the huge, dark, green ridge that overhangs my hotel) lies miles away to the south on the other side of the Bay ; and I am up above the clouds, in a little toy town which looks as if some child Titan had carried it up here and forgotten to take it down again ; surrounded by scenery which the Emperor, not without reason, lately pronounced superior to anything he had seen in his European tour. As I step out on the balcony for my morning "coffee and biscuit," the sun rises in all his splendour above the seven hill-tops, lighting up the dark, glassy green of the orange groves, the tall feathery crests of the graceful palms, the huge banner-like leaves of the banana, the spiky columns of the cactus, the great red rocks that stand isled in the sea of vegetation, and the rainbow plumage of the humming birds and butterflies that hover enjoyingly on the warm, voluptuous air ; till all above and below is one dazzling blaze of glory.

"The weather's been kind to you, sir," says my landlord, a trim, merry-faced little Irishman from Belfast, stepping out beside me with his baby perched on his shoulder. "If ye were up here in the end of June or the beginning of July, when the winter is at its worst, ye would find it mighty cold at this time o' morning."

"Does it ever freeze here?" I ask.

"Well, not often : but I *have* seen it, too. And the worst of it is this, that ye niver know what to put on, or what to take off. At sunrise ye come out in the light clothes that ye wore down in the plain, and the cold mist gets into your bones and makes ye shiver like a dog tied up in a wet sack. So in ye go and put on the very warmest things ye can find, and come out, as one may say, armed to the teeth ; but by that time the sun is getting well into his day's work, and ye find yourself meltin' and drippin'. So then it's off with the thick clothes and on with the thin ; and out ye go for a quiet stroll in the shade. But the minute you're away out in the open—ploush ! as if some one had pulled the string of a shower bath, down comes a spout of rain fit to wash down the Giant's Causeway. Home you paddle, with your clothes stickin' all over ye ; and the minute your back's turned, the sun takes advantage of your absence to come out again."

"Cold comfort for a man who is always out of doors," remark I ; "but I must take my chance ; it'll hardly be worse than Russia or Arabia ; that's one consolation. Now, Mr. Mills, just favour me with a

list of the sights in the neighbourhood, and I'll polish them off forthwith."

"Is it sights ye're askin' asther? Well, then, there's the big waterfall at Hamaritz—only ye can't get to it because the bridge is broken; then there's the Emperor's palace—a mighty fine place, only they won't let you in now he's there; and then there's the view from the top of the hill yonder—only ye can't see it because o' the thick trees; and then there's the Cascadina, or little waterfall—"

"And what's to prevent me from seeing *that?*" interrupt I, beginning to tire of this Irish string of contradictions.

"Nothin' whatever, praise be to Heaven for the same," says my chaperon, piously.

"Then as that seems to be the only one accessible, I'd better take it. How am I to get there?"

"Nothin' aisier; ye go past the palace yonder, and then strike off into the country (ye can't miss the road, for there's no getting off it without goin' down a precipice), and ask the first man ye meet for the Cascadina; and if the first can't tell ye, try the next."

With this satisfactory direction, I set out on my voyage of discovery, and a glorious voyage it is. To swing along at the fair "five miles an hour" pace, over a smooth, well beaten road, with all the glories of tropical vegetation poured out like a flood over the great mountain-walls on either side; to see the little river dancing and leaping among the black, broken rocks below, now flashing its foam in the sunlight, now slinking shyly away beneath the shadow of overhanging trees; to watch the broadening sunshine roll across the endless range of woods, tree-top after tree-top catching the glow, till the whole forest is one sea of splendour; to feel the fresh mountain-breeze stirring your blood till it leaps through your veins like living fire, making the mere sense of existence an enjoyment—this is, indeed, a delight, such as few pleasures upon earth can rival.

Onward, ever onward; past overarching leaves of brightest crimson, past crumbling walls alive with glittering lizards, and great boulders of black rock, down which the living green of the trailing ferns pours itself in a silent waterfall; and huge bell-like convolvuli, twining lovingly round the maimed stumps of the felled trees. Every turn of the road discloses some new object never seen in Europe. At the door of this little cottage to the right (perched like a bird-cage on the steep bank that overhangs the road) stands a trim-looking woman in the low-bodiced white dress which is here universal, chaffering with a passing mulatto over a magnificent toucan, which, in all the splendour of its gorgeous plumage, lies helplessly waiting to be plucked and roasted. Here, rumbling along at the rate of two miles an hour, comes a farmer's cart drawn by mules, with heavy gait and lumpish aspect. Yonder, far away overhead, a tiny speck of white in the endless green, is a stalwart

negro in linen jacket and broad-leaved straw hat, slashing away at the jungle with his bill-hook. And here, from a little gully to the left, comes something with a vengeance—a black boy of fourteen or fifteen, grinning from ear to ear as he shakes in his hand something which, at first sight might pass for a coil of rope, but which, on nearer view, shapes itself into the smooth, glittering length, and supple, writhing body, and bright, narrow, cruel eyes of a genuine cobra. Its convulsive tremor, and fruitless struggles to escape are painful to witness ; but there is a wicked gleam in the small, deep-set eyes, which shows that, bound and helpless as it is, the good old cobra spirit is in no wise extinguished.

"Buy snake, senhor. Fine snake—much pretty skin have."

And the black proceeds to relate, in his broken Portuguese, how he surprised the brute asleep in the long grass—how he disabled it with a blow across the neck, and succeeded in binding and carrying it off in triumph. He winds up by hinting that other members of the same profession may be found in the same place, should my excellency be graciously pleased to want them.

"You buy him, senhor—only two milreis (four shillings)—good snake—put him in little box, long time live."

The temptation is a strong one ; but I recollect the impossibility of conveying my prize to Europe without injury, and resist it. I reward the boy with a few coppers and he goes on his way rejoicing.

And now the road, shunning the great bastions of granite that bar its advance on the left, makes a sudden sweep round to the right, and displays to my astonished eyes the unexpected phenomenon of a bonâ fide toll-bar and turnpike gate, newly painted. Such a sight, amid this wilderness of barbaric grandeur, startles me almost as much as an advertisement of Harper Twelvetrees' patent blacking once did in the innermost chamber of the great pyramid ; but there is no time to moralise upon it, for now a dull rumble, familiar to my ear in this land of waterfalls, comes floating up from the far distance, while the river, already scores of feet below me, vanishes with an angry roar beneath the gloomy shadow of the overhanging thickets, as if impatient to reach the place of its descent. I exchange my long, swinging stride for a sharp trot, and head straight down the valley, unmindful of a dull leaden cloud that is creeping suddenly up behind the mountains, ominous of a coming storm. Deeper and darker grows the gorge—blacker and steeper rise the rocks on either side—more and more thickly crowd the serried masses of jungle that line the channel ; while the roar of the waterfall, hitherto dull and distant as the moan of a far-off sea, now waxes louder and sharper and clearer—a guide which no one can mistake. See ! yonder in the depths of the gully, a dazzling streak of white shows itself for one moment through the rank masses of leaves, like the white turbans of Khaled's Arabs amid the Greek phalanx at Yermouk. Here, at last, is the Cascadina, beyond a doubt. I "put

on the steam" in earnest, and, leaping upon the low boundary wall that runs along the edge of the chasm, look down upon a scene which few Alpine landscapes can parallel.

On either side of the spot where I stand, the dark masses of wooded mountain, hitherto standing sullenly apart, fling themselves forward against each other, like meeting thunderclouds ; and in the sweep of the rising wind, the great billows of the swaying forest toss and roar far overhead, till, as I look up, the whole of the mighty mass that towers above me seems shaking itself from its foundations, and about to come crashing down in one great whirl of ruin. Below, the black gorge yawns like an open sepulchre, while at its very mouth, breasting the full rush of the charging torrent, stands a huge black boulder twenty feet in height—such a one as Mimas or Enceladus may have hurled at the gods with whom they fought—plumed with crested ferns, and seeming, in its vast passive resistance, like an emblem of gigantic inaction which still paralyses the growing energies of Brazil. Dashing full upon the unyielding barrier, the checked torrent literally piles itself up into a great pyramid of living foam, flashing, quivering, and seething incessantly ; then bursting asunder, it leaps in two great jets down the precipice on either side of the rock, and vanishes into the black, tomb-like gorge with a sullen roar. All along the brink of the chasm huge bell-like convolvuli bend lovingly towards the refreshing spray ; and that nothing may be wanting to complete the picture, a large bird, startled from the thicket by my approach, flits athwart the sunlight in a momentary flash of its gorgeous plumage, like a living rainbow.

Scrambling down to the water's edge, I find that some public-spirited individual has kindly laid a plank from a projecting rock to the outer face of the boulder, and that my way lies open before me. A minute suffices to perch me on the top, where, seated upon a soft cushion of moss and fern, such as would gladden the heart of a boating man the night after a race, I look down upon many an old friend amid the encircling forests. There rises the tall, slender cocoa-palm, slim and graceful and haughty as an Arab sheikh—a born patrician of the forest ; and his bastard brother the palm-royal ; the noble araucaria, stately and expansive ; the beautiful tree-fern, with her long, drooping hair ; and the mighty pirijao, strongest and hardest of Brazilian trees, all whose strength and hardness are powerless to save him from a lingering death in the coils of the thug-like liana ;* and others, too many to name—the lance-like cactus, the feathery fan-palm, the sail-broad banana, the dark, glossy green of the orange tree, and the flaming crimson of the poncetta. As I look down upon them, I seem to see once more the figures of the brave men who perished in these forests, centuries ago, in a hopeless struggle toward the long-sought mines of

* The Brazilians give to these vegetable garrotters the name of "matadores" (murderers).

the interior. Slowly and wearily they toil onward, that doomed band, through the deadly beauty of that grand, gorgeous, cruel wilderness in which no man can live—some still boisterous in their reckless mirth, others haggard with unconfessed dread and the gathering shadow of the grave. One by one—beneath the grinding torture of famine, or the slow agony of disease, or the felon stroke of Indian arrows—they sink down to die on that never-ending march ; and the stately palms bend over them in pity, and the sweet wild-flowers twine lovingly around their bleaching bones and rusty armour, as if Nature herself repented of the deed that she had done. But at this point my musings are broken by a voice from above.

"Hola, senhor ! had you not better make for some shelter, before the storm comes on ? "

I start, and look up. On the road above me stands one of the most picturesque objects in nature—a bonâ fide mulateer, with his sandals of plaited yarn, his close-fitting drawers and smart white jacket, his red scarf folded jauntily across his breast, and his round flat hat, with its trim little cockade, cocked knowingly on one side of his brown, handsome, brigand-like face. Whipping up his long train of mules with one hand, he points warningly with the other to the cloud overhead, which, since I last looked at it, has overspread half the sky, darkening the air like the shadow of some vast banner. The warning is kindly meant, but it comes too late. As I spring up the bank, the dreary moan of the wind changes to a sharp howl ; a dull, crashing roar runs through the great billows of swaying forest ; twigs and broken boughs fly in every direction, and the whole fury of the storm breaks loose at once. In an instant I am choked, and blinded, and drenched to the skin, while the firm earth melts into liquid mire beneath my feet, and through the driving mist the rain hisses like a shower of arrows. Rock and river, hill and forest, have vanished like a dream ; nothing is left but the dark roots of the mountains looming through chill grey mist, and the weltering ooze beneath my feet.

Having once come on, the storm seemed determined to make a day of it ; and all the way back to Petropolis I am buffeted by the wind, and scourged by the rain, and splashed by the ankle-deep mud, and nearly run down at times by some passing waggon. When at last I struggle up the steps of my hotel, my landlord's face on first catching sight of me is a perfect study.

"Never mind," I reply, in answer to his expressions of sympathy ; "I've done my work, anyhow—that's one comfort ! "

And that, after all, is the best comfort that any man can have.

AMID THE ALPS.

"**B**Y the way, Rawdon, what became of that meerschaum of yours?"

I asked him, as we sat one night over the camp-fire.

"What meerschaum?"

"The one you bought of the old German general at Holstein. I secured its twin."

"I may answer your question by asking what became of yours," returned Rawdon, puffing out the smoke.

"Mine! That pipe of mine did a vast amount of travelling: if you care to know. It looked with its fiery eye askance at the pyramids; dipped with me along the serpent-bordered waters of the Nile; burned its small pile of incense along the storied Rhine. It yearned pensively and dropped an ash by the ashes of Herculaneum and Pompeii. It wended its way past the 'lighthouse of the Mediterranean.' It lowered about Mecca and Medina, and at last, when in poetic mood, by the Caspian, immortalized by Moore's liquid verse—my lips relaxed their hold and my pipe fell into the sea."

"Quite a history," remarked Rawdon. "Mine committed suicide." Larco laughed.

"Truth," said Rawdon. "As I stood on London Bridge my heretofore faithful pipe leaped from my lips into the Thames. A clear case of voluntary suicide."

"You had quite an adventure after I left the party, Fitzhugh wrote me."

"Had I? Let me see: it was soon after you left our party that we made the ascent—I attempted it, rather—of Mont Blanc."

"Yes, that was what Fitzhugh spoke of in his letter. What about it all?"

"One can hardly hope to do justice to anything which one tells of Switzerland," began Raymond, after a pause of thought. "The country must be seen to be appreciated; and it must be seen by an artist eye and appreciated by a soul endowed with a deep, religious sense of the miracles which God alone could create, to get the faintest conception of its wild, wonderful, and magnificent scenery. So sudden and varied are the changes which the eye beholds that it seems more like a fairy land floating in the unreal mirage of a dream than like anything real."

"Ay."

"The great height and magnitude of the mountains, glistening with eternal snow; the awful chasms opening between them; the bolt upright precipices; the dark ravines, with here and there a shadowed pool or

lake, and the fertile valleys blooming in luxuriance, combine to make a picture of rare excellence, and of unsurpassed, wondrous beauty."

"Well, go on, Rawdon."

"Seen on a cloudless day, the sparkling glaciers, piled up and pointed in rare and fantastic form, dazzle the eye and fill the soul with wonder. Here a snow-white city lifts its spires and glistening pinnacles in frozen silence, like a mighty petrifaction. There, huge columns, like leaning towers of marble, catch the sun's glare on their polished surfaces. Again, one sees groups of marvellous statuary—figures standing, leaning, anything—and seemingly in death-like repose."

"But about your adventure, Rawdon?"

"It was not much of an adventure," he retorted. "We had passed the winter at Geneva, a small few of us, finding it possessed among its citizens many of the most learned and scientific men of Europe. From this place the view of the Alps is unsurpassed. Towards spring, parties of travellers going through the place made us restless, and we also started. As our little party moved on towards the hamlet where we were intending to tarry a few days and await a propitious time for ascending Mont Blanc, I was so unfortunate as to get mounted upon the only treacherous steed in the lot. Never did Pegasus throw his rider with less warning than my beast of a horse threw me. I escaped with, as I thought, the trifling injury of a sprained wrist. But I got deceived in judging that a sprained wrist was but a trifle, for my hand began to swell and grow discoloured: as to my thumb, it might as well have been a pine knot, for all the feeling there was in it: 'twas my right hand too. The rest waited several days for me to make the ascent with them; but finding that my hand mended so slowly, they grew impatient, and went on without me. It did not much matter, for parties were coming up every week or two, and I should not lack company. The tediousness of my stay at the inn was very much brightened by the kind attentions of my host's daughter, pretty Jennie Dessonnard."

Rawdon paused.

"I became impatient of the delay," he continued, "just as you, Larco, are getting impatient because I don't talk quicker. No sooner did cautious people suggest the impracticability of my attempting the ascent at all, urging as objections the dangerous season of the year, and the inconvenient stiffness of my wrist, than I made up my mind to risk the undertaking at all hazards. This unhappy trait of character lies dormant, or is active, in every nature."

"What do you mean about the dangerous season?"

"Well, I was detained by the illness longer than you think for, Larco: the summer and the season were alike over. That wound of mine had complications that you'd not care to hear about."

"I had no idea of that. Go on."

"The arrival in the hamlet one night of a famous naturalist and several of my countrymen, accompanied by the noted guides, Coutet and Devoriassond, decided me to no longer postpone the enterprise. My host and the doctor argued against it in vain. We—I and the new party—remained out late one evening viewing the beautiful scenery by moonlight. Mystic turret, tower, and pinnacle were tipped with glistening and effulgent light."

"I have seen that."

"An hour or so before midnight, while my eyes were riveted upon a point far up the dazzling heights, where reposed what might be thought a garden of statuary, all the forms of the statues clearly defined—upright, bending over, recumbent—I began to think to myself, what a disagreeable effect this long gazing, even by moonlight, has upon the organs of sight——"

"But why?"

"Because I got the impression that the petrified groups were moving. I looked away, rubbed my eyes, and looked back again. The delusion still existed. It seemed so real, that I touched De Vare's arm.

"Do you notice anything unusual there beyond the cone—towards the Chamonix?"

"He gazed steadfastly for a time, and then spoke to the guide. Coutet sprang to his feet with a yell.

"An avalanche! an avalanche!" shouted the guide in stentorian tones.

"We started just as Coutet had done: all taking up a position to watch the descent. First, the movement was so gradual as hardly to be noticed; but, gathering power with its progress, it soon increased its speed until a dull roar was distinguishable.

"What is its course?" anxiously inquired our host of De Vare.

"Towards us, direct," answered the imperturbable traveller.

"We were filled with consternation. As the roar increased, the villagers rushed from their beds in terror, uttering shrieks and cries. 'The avalanche! the avalanche!'

"We stood rooted to the spot. The thunder increased and neared us. Vast acres of the solid mountain-side were slipping with fearful rapidity towards the direction we were in. There was of course no real danger.

"The pinnacle yonder," said the immovable De Vare, "will save us. The avalanche strikes it, shaves the irregularities from its side, shoots it many angles to the right, saving our hamlet at the expense of some other!"

"He was right. From that, or some other cause, the death-dealing mass of ice rushed away into the valley beyond.

"A dangerous season to make an ascent," said every one, when we got down home. But we resolved to try it.

"Early on the morning of the 17th a party of six, accompanied by the before-named guides, started upon the perilous undertaking. After proceeding a short distance, we were made to halt by our guides, for the purpose of being tied together, with sufficient space between us to allow of uninterrupted movements: then in turn we were fastened to the guides themselves. It is doubtful if one in a score would safely return unless this precaution were taken, for there is a continual tripping of heels: first one, then another, slipping and falling upon the glaciers. You don't, Larco; you've not made the ascent."

"And don't want to make it," I growled, like a surly fox.

Rawdon smiled, and turned the fire about. Then resumed.

"If we had got the idea that there was either ease or comfort in the enterprise, it was speedily dispelled by actual experience. Shelves of rock met us everywhere, along which we had to crawl on our hands and knees; precipices towered above, up which our weary way was made by foot-holds cut with the hatchets of our guides. Terrifying chasms yawned on either side. Mysterious fissures, whose bottom and depth were lost in distance, had to be leaped over with the assistance of guide and staff. As we ascended the air became more rare, and the nose smarted with every inhalation. We made a tortuous way, winding about to escape chasms and evade towers of ice, or tremblingly crossing abysses on frail bridges of snow that might crumble at any step."

"Hope you liked it!"

"We had a toilsome day, and did not succeed in making a very great distance, for my wrist troubled me after a few hours' exertions with it, and began to swell. However, we pitched upon a place to spend the night, it being partially sheltered from the cutting wind; and while Coutet prepared the supper, I climbed upon a pinnacle to take in the magnificent view stretched abroad before my eyes. It cannot be described except in faint outlines. Far below these icy fields reposed the verdant vales teeming with beauty and life; and placid Leman, like a sea of glass, sparkled in the setting sunlight, while Jura's distant hills were well defined against the clear sky. Thus night came on. But the solemn stillness that fell upon us, broken at intervals by the indescribable crash of the crunching pieces of snow descending on every side, is beyond description. Still we got to sleep."

"Glad you could sleep, Rawdon!"

"In the morning we awoke refreshed, and resumed the ascent, although I found great inconvenience from my sore and stiff wrist, and was obliged to carry my staff in the other hand. Not to linger on details, we, at last, after much suffering and danger, reached the goal which we sought. But I would say that if one undertakes this or a similar enterprise with the fond delusion that through it all he can maintain a dignified manner, he will find the fond delusion vanish."

"*Bien entendu.*"

"Many a chasm the traveller must pass on the horizontal. The sure feet of the guide crosses a narrow isthmus of snow, which he is fearful an untrained foot may slip upon ; therefore the traveller must submit to a prostrate position and be hauled across, his head taking the route of a ploughshare and leaving a broad furrow ploughed for the next comer to slide into. Again, the tension of the nerves will, ere many hours, cause the legs to buckle and bend in exact imitation of a devotee of Bacchus."

"Pleasant !"

"We encountered a 'pleasant' tempest, too, thunder and lightning, when it seemed as if the whole Alps were splitting from base to peak, so heavy were the frequent detonations. But we were safely up and getting back, having met with many incidents, but no accidents. When within a mile of the hamlet from which we had started, the nearness of our journey's end tended to make us careless. Holding my staff somewhat heedlessly with my left hand, it so unexpectedly caught in a small fissure that my feet slipped from under me, and I fell. The smart jerk upon the rope drew out the knot, which must have been undoing for some time ; and being at the end of the cord I found myself loosed from the whole party and descending the precipitous glacier with fearful velocity. Instantly a cry of horror from above announced that the accident had been discovered. But I was beyond their aid.

"I drew in my breath as I listened. That I was not instantly killed in striking at the foot of the precipice, down which I had first descended, was owing to my position of feet foremost ; but the shock of the concussion left a feeling as of paralysis. My staff I still retained ; but the point had caught and broken off. Down I went directly into the yawning end of a fissure, my staff catching feebly at the jagged walls. No doubt the fissure was hundreds of feet in depth, but I was not destined to sound the bottom."

"No !"

"The rains and thaws, the catching and splintering of crumbling avalanches, had poured tons of shelly ice directly into the mouth of the chasm ; and apart from being severely scratched by the sharp particles, and being stunned by the force of my stopping, after the rapidity of my descent, I was not seriously injured when I stopped. There I was, in a well-like aperture of rattling, shelly ice, and unconscious. The rest is what I learnt later."

"But you are alive, Rawdon."

"Yes. Horrified as the whole party were, they had yet the sense to hasten the descent to the hamlet, and procure ropes and lights—for night had then set in. 'To secure the body,' said the guides. And the news spread, and the cry went echoing along the village, 'Man lost ! Man lost in a chasm !'

"In an hour's time the two guides, De Vare and Moulett, and another

guide, were ready to ascend the slight distance to the point where the accident happened. Just outside the hamlet they were surprised to be joined by Jennie Dessonard. She was known to be as fleet of foot as the chamois, and no one disputed her right to accompany the party. They toiled up to the fissure where I had disappeared, and then held a consultation. Was it best to lower a lamp? Doubtless the depth would make such a proceeding useless. Should one of the men be lowered by the others? This was an expedition not to be coveted. The party consisted wholly of large, heavy men; their weight might make the grinding of the rope instant destruction; and, at any rate, would be attended by great danger even to those who held the ropes. Yet there was no other alternative.

"Young Jennie, brave girl, stepped forward and began uncoiling the rope.

"'I am going down,' she said. 'M. Coutet is to fasten this about me; I came for the purpose of descending the fissure.'

"They tried to dissuade her.

"'If you will not secure me, I will tie it myself,' she affirmed.

"They yielded the point at last after some argument. With the rope fastened about her, and the lamp strapped to her breast, the intrepid girl was slowly swung into the fissure. With her staff, steel-pointed at each end, she kept herself from striking against the jagged sides. In twenty minutes she signalled to be hauled up—then signalled them to stop. She had touched the bottom of the crevice, which was wonderfully shallow, and not finding any body, she conjectured that it must have lodged somewhere above.

"Her lamp had streamed into the basin and discovered me. She did not stop to ascertain if I was dead; but, taking the lines which she had brought, she bound me to her—wrapping her mantle about my head, lest in some manner it might beat against the walls of the chasm; and then gave the signal to be drawn up.

"And drawn up we were in safety. I was borne back to the hamlet—where, though still unconscious, I was found to be living."

"But the escape was marvellous, Rawdon," I said.

"It was."

"And what of Jennie?"

"She married Coutet."

MEMORIES.

No treasures rare
 Guardeth this casket with its golden hasp ;
 But scrolls, traced by dead hands mine cannot clasp :
 A braid of shining hair :

In rosy bloom,
 A pictured face, undimmed by lines of grief :
 Some withered sprays, their every fragrant leaf
 Still breathing faint perfume.

By the bright hearth
 I watch no more the firelight's fitful gleams ;
 But memory sees again far distant streams
 Gladdening the sunny earth :

Far in the west,
 Red sunsets flushing all the grassy meads,
 Tall golden lilies clustered in the reeds :
 Doves fluttering to their nest.

An olden Grange,
 With gables brown, rich pastures, clover sweet,
 Still pools, leaf-shadowed from the summer heat,
 Untouched by time and change.

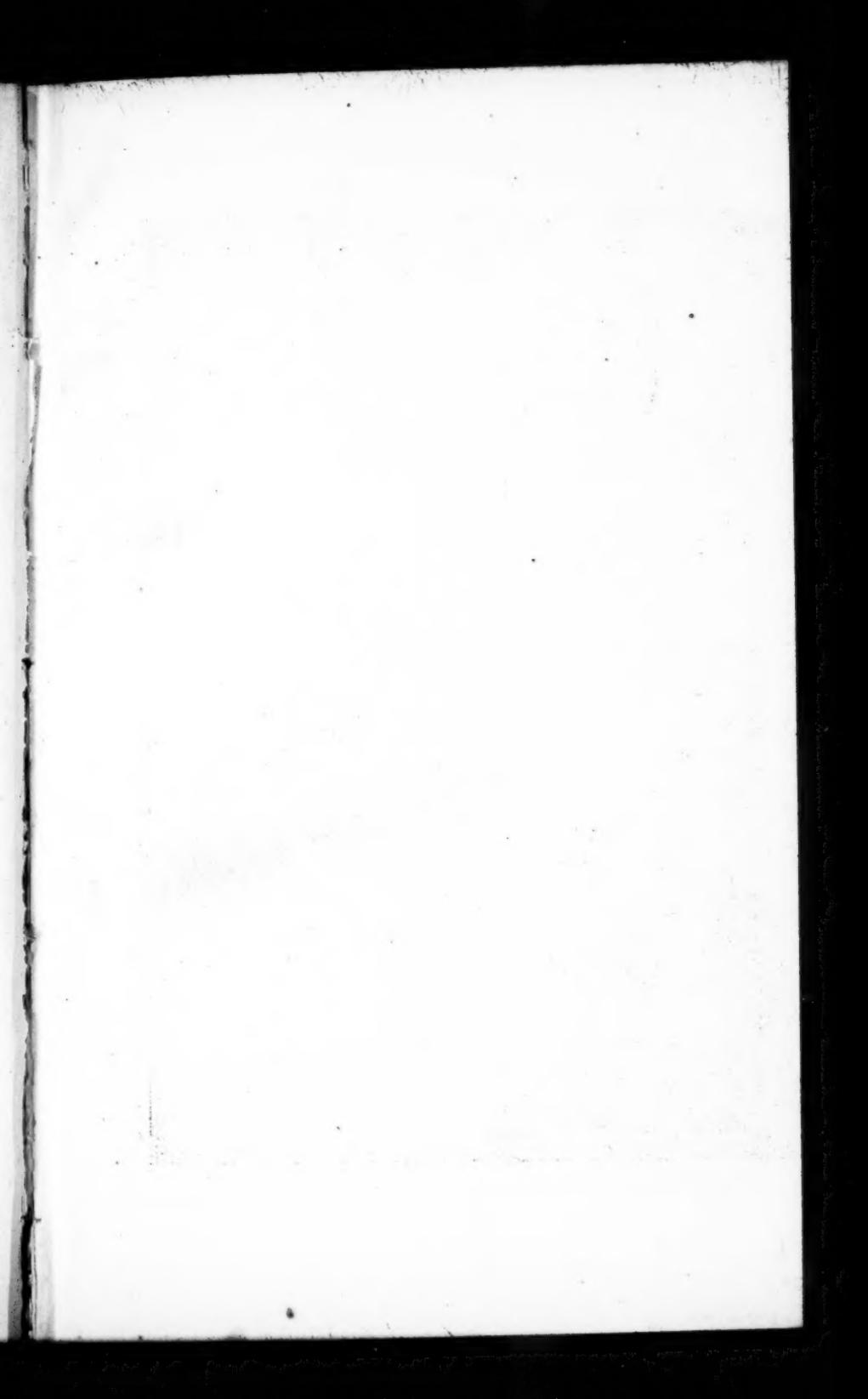
Hushed sounds return
 Of fresh winds sweeping o'er the breezy hill,
 The ripple of a little mountain rill
 Hidden amid the ferns ;

Low whispering woods,
 The robins twitter from the leafless hedge ;
 Theplash of lonely waves upon the edge
 Of moorland solitudes.

Oh, visions sweet !
 Dreams of a past that will not live again,
 As dew on flowers, or as the soft spring rain
 Upon the budding wheat,

Your low tones come,
 Waking the buried hopes of years agone,
 The olden loves that left me one by one :
 Footsteps that have gone home.

J. I. L.





EDMUND EVANS,

M. ELLEN EDWARDS.

"Mr. Strange came in admiring everything, from the room to the bucket, and assuring Nurse Chaffin that he rather preferred wet floors to dry ones."